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EASTERN BENGAL DISTRICT GAZETTEERS.

TIPPERA

BY

J. E. WEBSTER,

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PREFACE.

In compiling this account I have borrowed freely from many sources, especially from Mr. Cumming's Report on Chakla Roshnābād, which is a mine of information, and from Babu Kailāsh Chandra Singh's edition of the 'Rājmālā.' I have also to express my indebtedness to Mr. Clayton, Collector of Tippera, for placing the resources of his office at my disposal and for examining the draft, to Captain Christian for checking the account of the public health of the district, and to other officers of the staff for their assistance.

The old correspondence on the Collector's side is well preserved, but the changes in the constitution of the district down to 1835 cause many gaps; and on the Magistrate's side no letters are forthcoming before 1842.

The nomenclature too is puzzling and liable to mislead. Many of the old revenue terms have dropped out of use and are difficult to understand, and other terms appear to be used carelessly. We find Tippera spoken of either as a province or as a district, and the latter term often means *pargana*. *Mahāl* is used of an entire estate or of a village within an estate. There were at first Commercial Chiefs, besides Political Chiefs at Dacca and Chittagong; there were Collectors of Customs as well as Collectors of Revenue; and it is often difficult to make out who are meant and what the functions and positions of the different officers really were.

For the sake of clearness most statistics are given in round figures, omitting fractions and in many cases taking the nearest hundred or thousand.

J. E. WEBSTER.

27th February 1910.

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GAZETTEER

OF THE

TIPPERA DISTRICT.

CHAPTER I.

PHYSICAL ASPECTS.

General description.

The district of Tippera, the most northerly district of the Chittagong division, lies between 23° 2′ and 24° 16′ north latitude and between 90° 34′ and 91° 22′ east longitude; the Tropic of Cancer thus passes over the district. It extends over a total area of 2,499 square miles, and contains a population, according to the census of 1901, of 2,117,991 persons. The principal town and administrative head-quarters is Comilla, situated on the Gumti river in 23° 28′ N. and 91° 11′ E.

Origin of Name.

The district takes its name from the adjoining State of Hill Tippera, to which it was attached formerly. The derivation of the name is uncertain. The state annals show Tripura, grandson of Yayāti, King of the Seven Continents, whose deeds are chronicled in the Rig Veda, to have been second in the line of the kings, and the name has also been explained as meaning either the "three cities" or the country of Tripureswari. The latter derivation is connected with an ancient legend of Hill Tippera, according to which no less than 51 goddesses sprang out of the corpse of Bhagavati, the wife of Mahadeva, and by some mysterious process dispersed over the face of the world. One of them, Tripureswari, or the mistress of the three worlds, took up her residence at Udaipur, the former capital of Hill Tippera, where a large temple was dedicated to her. This temple ranks as one of the great *tirthas* or holy shrines in this part of Bengal and every year attracts thousands of devout pilgrims.

It is, however, possible, perhaps probable, that the name is not of Hindu origin, and the author of the "Rajmālā" derives it from the words *tui-pra*, meaning in the language of the hill people the country towards the sea. The hill men themselves pronounce the name *Tipra*, which would be a natural contraction from either Tui-pra or Tripura, and the fact that Tui-mā, the Meghna, is to this day an object of worship among the Tipperas lends colour to the former derivation; but the solutions are at best plausible guesses.

Boundaries.

Tippera is bounded on the north-west by the districts of Dacca and Mymensingh; on the north-east by Sylhet; on the east by the State of Hill Tippera; on the south by Noākhāli; and on the west by the main stream* of the Meghnā, which separates it from Faridpur, Dacca and Mymensingh.

* Notification of 17th September 1891.

The boundary between the State of Hill Tippera and the British district was surveyed and laid down by arbitrators in the year 1854, and the lines adopted in their award have ever since been considered to determine the boundary, irrespective of possession. Brick boundary pillars were erected in 1866 at the angles of the boundary, and are under the control of, and liable to be repaired by, the British Government. Some of these pillars have been replaced by iron ones.

Natural configuration. In shape, the district resembles a long and somewhat narrow triangle over 90 miles in length running up between the Meghnā on the west and the forest-clad hills of Hill Tippera on the east, with its base resting on the district of Noākhāli. The country slopes down gradually from the foot of the Tippera Hills towards the west; and there is also a perceptible downward inclination from north to south, which is most pronounced in the north of the district and along the banks of the Meghnā. The slope in these two directions is so gradual, however, that it nowhere disturbs the general aspect of the country, which presents an almost continuous flat surface, its level broken only by the Lālmai Hills, an isolated range five miles west of Comilla stretching for 11 miles from north to south, and by outlying spurs from the low forest-clad hills of the Tippera State which here and there fall just within the eastern border. The greater portion of the district is a rice plain, well cultivated and intersected by numerous rivers, streams, and creeks, which in the south and west are tidal.

Natural divisions. There are no sharply defined natural divisions, but the aspect of the country varies considerably in different parts. To the north-east along the boundary of Hill Tippera is a narrow strip of upland in which small ridges called *tilas* alternate with *bils* or boggy valleys. The rest of the Brāhmanbāriā subdivision is a low-lying plain, so low in parts that the water lies all the year round in great marshes, while most of the country is inundated during the rains to a depth of 5 feet or more, and near the junction of the Titās and Burigangā there is sometimes 20 feet of water over land which is high and dry during the cold weather. Similar conditions prevail over a considerable area in the south-west of the district, and the rest is but little higher. The inundation levels are about 26 feet above mean sea-level at Comilla, 20 feet at Lāksām, and 18 feet at Chāndpur. Owing to the extensive stretches of low land villages in Brāhmanbāriā tend to be far apart and well defined, but going southwards they break up into little groups of houses, tiny hamlets, each with its tanks, orchards, and gardens dotted about in the rice-fields.

Everywhere the village sites are well wooded but the trees are more numerous and luxuriant and their character more tropical in the south-west.

The traveller who glides down the Meghnā from Chātālpār to Chāndpur cannot fail to observe the gradually increasing richness

and luxuriance in the growth of palms and other trees. Some of the villages are buried in veritable forests where the stranger may lose his way, and looking round from some high place the horizon is bounded on every side by trees and not a house can be seen. And often from among the trees rises the delicate spire of some Hindu *Math*, standing usually on the bank of one of the big tanks that help to break the monotony of the level. In Comilla alone there are 400 tanks, and in the portion of the Chakla Roshnābād estate contained within this district no less than 3,661 have been counted. They are found in all parts of the district near Hindu temples, in front of Muhammadan mosques, close to abandoned homesteads, and frequently in the midst of a cultivated plain where they remain deserted and unused, with their banks covered with jungle. Some are of enormous size, resembling small lakes, and one, the Jagannāth Dighi, so called after Jagannāth Thākur, a member of the ruling dynasty of Tippera in the 17th century, extends over more than 40 acres. Many of them are centuries old and have now silted up or are thickly overgrown with weeds and rank vegetation, which in places form a layer thick enough to bear a man's weight.

Marshes. In the north and west of the district there are numerous marshes (*bils*), some very large. Thus in the Sarail *pargana* the Mediyar Hāor covers or used to cover 10 square miles, the Buroli *bil* 6 square miles, and those known as Hātia and Kājla 4 and 3 square miles respectively; in the Singer *pargana* the Gogra *bil* had an area of 8 square miles, and in the Bardakhāt *pargana* the Sandipa and Bayesakaha *bils* each extended over 3 square miles. These depressions probably owe their existence to the same convulsion of nature that produced the Sylhet *jhils* and play a most important part in the process of land making that goes on steadily in the delta of the Brahmaputra, the masses of still water having a far greater power of arresting the river floods and compelling the deposit of silt than an equal area of dry land would exercise.

In the rainy season these marshes present to the eye an unbroken expanse of vivid green, rice growing in the shallows, and in the deeper hollows and channels a coarse grass used for fodder. In the dry months they afford grazing to thousands of cattle. But year by year, though very slowly, their area tends to contract as they silt up owing to the deposits left by the overflow of the rivers, and so become more culturable. Within living memory the level of the marshes at the extreme north-west corner of Nurnagar has been raised by the yearly deposits from the floods of the Titās river, and boats no longer pass so easily over the Mediyar Hāor.

Hills. The only hills in the district are the Lālmai Hills situated five miles to the west of Comilla. The range extends from north to south for a distance of 11 miles from Mynamāti to Daitya Dighi, and is about 25 miles in circumference. The hills attain a height of 150 feet in a few places, but the average elevation is 40 feet

above the plains and 90 feet above sea-level; the highest peaks are Kālir Bāzār and Chāndimura, and there are small springs near these peaks and Bijaynagar. They were formerly thickly wooded, but the forest has been considerably thinned of late years and the greater part of the slopes is now cultivated; the highest points only are still covered by a dense under-growth of brush-wood, reeds, and coarse grasses.

Mineral. In 1871 brown iron ore, hydrated sesquioxide, was found in the Lālmai Hills, but it is probably not present in a quantity that would repay working.

River system. The rivers of the district may be divided into four different groups. The first consists of the Meghnā and its offshoots, the second of hill streams and torrents descending from the ranges in Hill Tippera, the third of streams flowing from one river to another, and the fourth of the rivers in the south.

The Meghnā. The Meghnā, which forms the eastern boundary of Tippera, pours down the channel of the old Brahmaputra southwards from Bhairab Bāzār, after receiving the waters of the Surmā or Barak river from Sylhet. Near Sātnal, about 10 miles below Dāūdkāndi, its volume is increased by the junction of the Sītālakhya, Burī Gangā and Dhaleswarī rivers, and further to the south, opposite Chāndpur, it receives the main streams of the Ganges and Brahmaputra, which enter it under the name of the Padmā. From the point of junction the united stream rolls southwards to the Bay of Bengal, forming a noble estuary, which is the outlet for the drainage of half India. It is to this estuary that the name Meghnā is usually given, but it is properly applied only to the channel of the old Brahmaputra from Bhairab Bāzār downwards; old maps mark the head-waters of the Meghnā as a small stream meandering through the Mymensingh district and joining the Brahmaputra near Bhairab Bāzār, about 60 miles (in a direct line) north of the present confluence. The general characteristics of the Meghnā are everywhere the same, a mighty rolling flood of great depth and velocity, sometimes split up into half a dozen channels by sandbanks of its own formation, sometimes spreading out into a wide expanse of water which the eye cannot see across. It is navigable by native boats of the largest burthen, and also by river steamers all the year round; but navigation is difficult and sometimes dangerous. At low tide the bed is obstructed by shifting sandbanks and by snags, and when the tide is high or the river is in flood, and especially when the monsoon is blowing, the surface often becomes too boisterous for heavy-laden river craft to ride in safety. The most favourable season for navigation is between November and February; but even in those months the native boatman fears to continue his voyage after nightfall. Alluvion and diluvion are constantly taking place, and large islands frequently form and shift the main current from near one bank to another. It is often hard to say what the real river bank is, and

the breadth of the channel varies from about a mile at Chātālpār to some seven miles below Chāndpur.

The most important marts on its banks from north to south are Chātālpār, Ajabpur Bāzār, Āshuganj, Chāndpur, and Himechar.

The Meghnā is affected by the tide as far north as Āshuganj, and in the southern portion of its course as far as Chāndpur the tidal phenomena are very marked, surpassing those of any other Indian river. The regular rise of the tide is from 10 to 18 feet; and at spring-tides, the sea rushes up in a single wave, known as the "bore." On the Meghnā the bore is no mere spectacle for admiration, but a justly dreaded danger to boatmen. It may be witnessed in its greatest development at the time of the equinoxes, when navigation is sometimes impeded for days together, especially when the wind blows from the south. Before anything can be seen, a noise like thunder is heard seawards in the far distance. Then the tidal wave is suddenly beheld, advancing like a wall topped with foam, of the height of nearly 20 feet and moving at the rate of 15 miles an hour. In a few minutes all is over, and the brimming river has at once changed from ebb to flood tide.

Offshoots of the Meghnā.

As the river approaches the district from the north, small channels separate from it and meander through the flat country adjoining its banks. After receiving the water of tributaries issuing from the western hills, these offshoots rejoin the Meghnā further on its downward course; their length varies from 10 to 150 miles according to the character of the country they traverse and the extent to which they wind through it; the most important are the Titās, Pāglī, Kataliā, Dhanagada, Matlab, and Udhamdi. Besides these there are innumerable creeks (*khāls*) intersecting the country in the neighbourhood of the Meghnā. These creeks and the nature of the country they traverse lend colour to the theory that what is now dry land was once the bed of this great river, which has receded, leaving extensive *chars* behind, while the network of *khāls* are only the depressed portions of this alluvial formation.

The Titās.

The greatest of these branches of the Meghnā is the Titās, which bifurcates from the parent stream near Chātālpār and rejoins it midway between Lālpur and Māniknagar. It has a very sinuous course, extending over 150 miles, and, with its numerous ramifications, waters a considerable portion of the Brāhmanbāriā subdivision. This river is now silting up at its confluence with the Howrah and also a little further down stream at Krishnagar. The most important places on its banks are Brāhmanbāriā, which is connected with Gokarna by a short canal, cut across one of the bends of the river, which saves a long winding journey of 30 miles, and Akhaurā, an important railway station on the Assam-Bengal Railway and a centre of the jute trade.

Hill streams

The most important of the hill streams flowing through the district are the Gumti, Howrah, Kāgnī, Senai Burī, Hari Mangal, Kākdī, Pāglī, Kuruliā, Balujuri, Sonaicharī, Handachorā, Jangaliā

and Durduriā. As a rule, they are not of any great length, their course being quickly terminated by their confluence with the Meghnā or its branches. Their volume is small except after heavy rain, when they come down in spate and are apt to overflow their banks.

The Gumti.

The largest of these rivers is the Gumti, which rises in the interior of Hill Tippera, and after a meandering course through the hills, turns westward and enters this district near Bībīr Bāzār, about 8 miles east of Comilla. It then flows westwards through the district, and after a long tortuous course joins a branch of the Meghnā near Dāūdkāndi. The total length of the river is estimated at about 200 miles, but the distance in a direct line from the point where it enters the district to where it meets the Meghnā does not exceed 40 miles; its average breadth is 200 feet or more. During the rains the river is full from bank to bank and the stream is deep and rapid, but with the approach of the cold weather it shrinks, and by degrees becomes fordable in most places, until the rains again set in. After heavy rain the water pours off the hills and meeting the flood of the Meghnā is ponded up. Even in years of normal rainfall the river rises till the surface of the water is 5 feet above the level of the surrounding country; and when the rainfall has been more than usually heavy it sometimes bursts through the embankments on either side that protect Comilla and its neighbourhood.

The river is liable to change its course, and about 35 years ago it cut through the neck of one of the numerous bends near Jāfarganj, and thereby saved a journey of three miles, substituting for it one of 50 yards. It is not navigable by large boats above Jāfarganj except in the three months of heaviest rainfall; at other seasons merchandise is transhipped to smaller boats or carried by cart to Comilla. It is, however, the principal channel of trade between this district and Hill Tippera and, though shallow and full of snags in its upper reaches, a considerable trade passes along it. Timber, bamboos, rattan canes, and thatching grass are floated down stream, while salt, rice, cloth, ironware and other articles required by the hillmen are poled or towed up in boats. The most important marts on its banks are Comilla, Jāfarganj, Companyganj, Murādnagar, Pānchpukuriā and Lālpur.

Intermediate rivers.

The third class of rivers consist of those which connect the rivers traversing the district, such as the Bijni, which connects the Titās with the Burī or Bijaiganga, and another river, also called the Burī or Burīgangā, which joins the Gumti and the Burī river last named, after which both combined fall into the Titās.

Southern rivers.

The last group of rivers comprises the Dākātia, the Little Feni and the Kāladumuria.

The Dākātia.

The Dākātia flows in a westerly direction through the southern part of the district for 80 miles, and passing Lāksām, Chitosi and Hājīganj, falls into the Meghnā near Chāndpur. It is fed by numerous hill streams, but the supply of water received from this

source is insignificant, and for nine months in the year it is fed by tidal currents from the Meghnā. It formerly joined the Meghnā near Raipurā and has taken its present course owing to the excavation of the Chāndpur *khāl* or canal. This canal, which was excavated in 1872, joins Shekherhāt on the Dākātia with Chāndpur on the Meghnā and substitutes a short cut of three miles for a three days' journey.

The Little Feni, a river which is also known as the Dākātia or Sindurgangā, flows south in a winding course from the low hill ranges of Hill Tippera into the Noākhāli district. It is fed by the Kakri river passing Singher from the east and by offshoots of the Dākātia from the west, as well as by the Bijaipur *khāl* between Comilla and Bijaipur and by the Chaudagrām *khāl* in the direction of Lāksām. Little Feni.

The Kālādumuriā is another large river in the south, extending from Elliotganj to the Meghnā. It is an important drainage channel during the rains and is fed by tidal currents at other seasons; it is navigable throughout the year and is 30 miles in length. Kālādumuria.

Once upon a time the Meghnā was only the outlet for the waters of the Surma Valley, but long ago, it is uncertain when, the Brahmaputra broke eastward through the present district of Mymensingh, and united its stream with that of the Meghnā. In Rennell's time, 1787 A.D., the Brahmaputra joined the Meghnā at Sonarāmpur near the present village of Āshuganj. The combined rivers then flowed southward very nearly in their present course, though Dāūdkāndi was at that time on the main channel. Between Dāūdkāndi and Chāndpur the Dhaleswari joined the Meghnā, but the Ganges flowed on separately nearly as far as the island of Dakshin Shāhbāzpur. The internal rivers of the district appear to have flowed in 1787 approximately in their present courses, but the main stream of the Dākātia passed southward to Raipur, instead of emptying itself as at present through the Chāndpur *khāl*. Changes in the rivers

The Bijaiganga is said to have been originally a canal dug by Rājā Bijay Mānikya in the sixteenth century and called after him.

The Lālmai hills and the undulating country to the east are formed of upper tertiary rocks. The rest of the district is alluvial, the soil consisting of sandy clay and sand along the course of the rivers and of fine silt consolidating into clay in the flatter parts of the river plain. Geology.

The principal trees of the district are the Banyan (*Ficus indica*), *bat* in the vernacular; the Pipal or *aswatha* (*Ficus religiosa*); the *nim* (*Melia azadirachta*); the *bel* (*aegle marmelos*) whose trefoil is sacred to Siva; the Tamarind, (*amli* or *tentul*); the Cassia (*amaltās*); the Rana or Petrāj (*Amura rohituka*); Jām or Indian blackberry; the jārul (lagerstrœmia flos reginæ); the cotton tree, *Simal*; the *māndār* (*Erythrina indica*); the mango; Botany.

and several species of palms. The villages are built amid plantations of betelnut and other palms, *māndār*, bamboos, and fruit trees. There are no timber trees of commercial value, though the wood of the mango is useful, and that of the tamarind and *kul* (*Zizyphus jujuba*) is hard grained and excellent. The *Amaltās* or *Sonāli** makes durable posts for houses, and rough furniture is made from the *punya*. *Jārul* is used for boat building, but the timber comes usually from the hills. In the marshes are found *sola* or *bat* (*Aeschynomene paludosa*), *Seibansa*, *sitalpāti* (*Phrynium dichotomum*) and similar aquatic plants, and the *muktapāti* (*Clinogyne dichotoma*) often covers large areas. Cane (*bet*) grows in abundance, and a shrub known as *murta* or *mortāg* supplies fuel while its bark is made into mats. A list of plants prepared in 1888 shows 49 species of timber trees, 56 kinds of uncultivated trees and plants yielding food, 71 used in European and 198 in native medicine, 14 giving oil, 7 used in dyeing, and 4 used in tanning.

Fauna.

Wild animals are scarce, and there is but little game left except in the Lālmai hills and the uplands adjoining the Hill Tippera ranges. The Lālmai hills hold a good many hares, and a few barking deer and an occasional leopard, and on the eastern border tiger, leopard, wild hog, and various species of wild cats are still found. In the north there is a breed of hunting dogs, said to be descended from dogs imported by a sporting Diwān of Sarāil. Jackals abound and share with vultures and crows the duties of village scavenger. The mongoose is common, but there are few monkeys or squirrels to be seen. Bird life is luxuriant. Fish eagles, kites, brilliantly coloured kingfishers, snippets and other water-fowl throng round the marshes, and in a recent report it is stated that the settlers on a new *char* on the Meghnā had made a handsome profit from paddy-birds' feathers. The road-side trees are full of small birds, golden oriel, crested bulbul, kingcrows, the crow-pheasant, woodpeckers, iridescent sun-birds, sparrows, hosts of little fly-catchers, and of course, the ubiquitous *maina*. At nightfall the air is resonant with their clamour, and even later the silence is broken by the deep-toned hoot of the horned owl and, alas, by the too insistent note of the copper-smith and the crescendo of the brain-fever bird. The game birds of the district include jungle-fowl, wild duck, teal, golden plover, and snipe, which afford fair sport in the winter months.

Climate.

The climate of Tippera, though exceedingly humid, is temperate and fairly healthy. January is the coolest month of the year, with a mean temperature of 66°, a mean maximum of 78° and a mean minimum of 53°. February is still cool, but in March the temperature rises rapidly, and in April attains its maximum of 91° to 92° in the heat of the day. For the next months the mean temperature keeps at a fairly constant level of 82° to 83°,

* Watts gives these as alternative names for the *Cassia fistula*, but I am told that the *amaltās* are more bitter and purgative than the *Sonāli*.

but the diurnal range gradually decreases from 18° in April to 10° in July, August and September. In October the nights begin to grow cooler, and some time in November the cold weather sets in, and December is very nearly as cool as January. All through the year the humidity is high. It is lowest in April at 82 per cent. rising gradually to a maximum of 90 per cent. in July and August, when it begins to decrease slowly.* In April heavy storms of rain are to be expected, bringing on an average a fall of some 5 inches, though in 1902-3 as much as 20 inches fell in this month. In May about one day in three on an average is wet, and 10 inches of rain are to be expected; the fall in this month is much more regular than in April. By June the rains should have set in and give 14½ to 15 inches, being the heaviest fall of the year. In July about an inch less, and in August about 13 inches of rain generally fall. During these three months at least one day in two is wet. Towards the end of August and in September the weather begins to fair, and the rainfall does not generally exceed 9½ inches, though in 1906 more than 22 inches fell and nearly 17 inches in the previous year. October brings only occasional showers, giving on an average 4½ inches of rain. November brings less than an inch with an average of only one wet day. December and January are generally fine with perhaps an occasional shower, giving a fraction of an inch. In February the rainfall averages nearly an inch, and storms in March should give about 3 inches. Altogether the normal rainfall for the year is about 75¾ inches, but there are very marked fluctuations from one year to another, and even from one part of the district to another. The rainfall in Comilla is rather heavier than at either Chāndpur or Brāhmanbāriā, and in the latter station the rains appear to set in earlier and cease sooner than in the more southern portions of the district. There are altogether eight recording stations in the district, and the figures quoted are based on the average of their returns.

Prevailing winds. During the cold weather from November to February the mornings are generally calm, but in the day a light breeze blows from the north. In the spring the prevailing wind is south-easterly, and in the hot weather, April to June, south south-east. During the rains the wind blows generally from east south-east.

General. For three or four months, from November to February, the climate of Tippera leaves little to be desired. The nights are cool, the mornings clear and fresh, even the noonday sun seems to have less power than in Hindustan; there are few mosquitoes or other insects, it rains seldom but the dust is not enough to annoy. From March to May the heat is rarely oppressive, but the continued high temperature and great humidity of the succeeding months are very enervating.

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* As much as 100 % has been recorded.

CHAPTER II.

HISTORY.

History. The early history of the country east of the Meghnā is shrouded in obscurity. In Mr. James Fergusson's essay* on the changes in the delta of the Ganges, the opinion is expressed that in the year 3000 B.C. the only practically habitable part of the great deltaic formation of Northern India was the alluvial plain of the province of Bengal on the banks of the Satlej and the Jamna. Even 1,000 years later it was only here and there on the banks of some minor streams that the country was in a state to support a large population and to possess considerable cities, and nearly up to the Christian era it was only on the southern hills or at the foot of the Himalayas that cities could be placed, because the central parts of the plain east of the Gogra were still unfit for human habitation. The pre-Aryan inhabitants, whoever they were, have left neither writings nor buildings as a record of their existence. We have, it is true, in the "Rājmālā," or chronicles of the kings of Tippera, an account of that dynasty from its very beginning, but this "Rājmālā" was only begun in the reign of King Dharma Mānikya, early in the fifteenth century, and can hardly be accepted as giving a reliable account of events much before that date. It has already been stated that the present district of Tippera was to the early Aryans *Pāndava barjita desh*, a country beyond their ken, and we get only the most passing references to it in their classical epics and religious treatises.

Sukhma. According to the Purānās many royal dynasties of Bengal trace their origins from Yayāti of the lunar race, lord of the seven continents, one of whose descendants by name Bali had five sons, Anga, Banga, Kalinga, Sukhma, and Pundra, who ruled over five countries called after them, which are identified respectively with East Bihar, East Bengal, Orissa, Tippera, and Northern Bengal.† This country of Sukhma is described by Kālidās as 'Tāliban Shyām Upakantha', 'a shore green with palms,' but we hear little more of it except that, in the wars chronicled in the Mahabhārat, Bhīm, after defeating the kings of Pundra, Kāshuki, Banga, and Tāmralipta, conquered also the "King of Sukhma and the Mlechhas who dwelt on the shores of the ocean." Before the 6th century A.D. we find no mention of a kingdom of Tippera east of the Meghnā. There is indeed a mention of 'Tripura' in the Mahabhārat, but this seems to refer to a country of that name near Koshāla in the neighbourhood of the modern Jabalpur. Babu Kailāsh Chandra Singh‡ says that Tripura is one of the coun-

* Journal of the Geographical Society of London, Vol. XIX, p. 321.
† Page 37, Vol. III, Ancient India, by R. C. Dutt.
‡ Rājmālā, p 8.

tries of which the names are given in the famous rock inscription of Samudra Gupta in the fourth century, but from the version given in Mr. R. C. Dutt's Ancient India* it appears that the country referred to is Kartripura, a name which bears but little resemblance to Tippera. The first historical light is thrown upon the subject in Hiuen Tsang's account of his travels in India in the seventh century A.D. He tells us that to the north-east of the country of Samatata (Eastern Bengal, corresponding apparently to Dacca and Mymensingh) on the borders of the sea among mountains and valleys one comes upon the kingdom of Chi-li-tcha-ta-le (Srikchatra), and that beyond that, on a bay to the south-east, one finds the realm of Kia-no-lane-kia (Kamalanka), and further on still to the south is the kingdom of To-lo-po-ti (Darapati)† This Kamalanka is generally identified with Comilla, the present capital of the district of Tippera, and perhaps To-lo-po-ti may stand for Tippera, as it will be seen that at that time the country of the Tipperas probably lay north and east of Comilla. We learn from the chronicles of the kings of Burma that in the year 1058 A.D. a prince of Pātikārā visited Burma and there married into the royal family and begot sons who ruled in Burma for a course of 200 years; and a copper-plate dated 1220 A.D. records that Kamalanka, Pātikārā, and other places were governed by rājās of the family of Ranabankamalla.‡ It is difficult to fix the limits of this little kingdom, but it probably did not extend beyond the Sadar and Chāndpur subdivisions of Tippera district and, perhaps, the northern portion of the present Noākhāli district. The Brāhmanbāriā subdivision belongs geographically and historically to South Sylhet. Hiuen Tsang.

Tipperas. We must now turn to the history of the Tipperas. According to the "Rājmālā" the kingdom of Tippera was founded by Tripura, grandson of Yayāti, from whom down to the present date a continuous list of 117 sovereigns is given. It is needless to say that this account of the origin of the rājās of Tippera is a pure myth. So far as can be ascertained, the Tipperas are a Tibeto-Burman race akin to the Shāns, one of the tribes included by Friederich Müller and other German ethnologists under the generic term 'Lohitic,' implying connection with the upper Brahmaputra or Lohit river. In their own language these people call themselves Mrung, or describe themselves by the name of one of the septs into which they are subdivided, and it is only when using Bengali that they speak of Tippera, or Tipra, which it is suggested means the country by the sea and was the name given to the plains by the hills men when they first made their way to the shores of the Meghnā. Drikpati,

* Ancient India, by R. C. Dutt, Vol. III, p 64.

† Life and Voyages of Hiuen Tsang, translated from Chinese into French by Stanislaus Julien, Book IV, p. 182.

‡ Rājmālā of Kailāsh Chandra Singh, p. 6.

eldest son of the second king of Tippera, is said to have married a daughter of the king of Cachar (Hiramba), and succeeded to the throne of that kingdom. At that time the kingdom of the Tipperas seems to have been contiguous to Hiramba, and thereafter spread slowly towards the south and west. It is said that a copper-plate still in existence records a grant of land in the village of Itwah in the Karimganj subdivision of Sylhet made in the year 640 A.D. by the Rājā of Tippera to five Kanauj Brahmans, from one of whom Bhānu Narayan, first Rājā of Sylhet, claimed descent.* Sukra Ray, 68th king, had his capital near the Manu river, a stream which rising in the hills of Tippera flows northwards, past Maulavi Bāzār in the district of Sylhet. Afterwards the capital was removed to Kailār Garh near the present Kasba in the eastern border of the Tippera district. The 73rd king, Jujhāruphā, is said to have subdued the country of Rāngamātiā, corresponding to the present district of the Chittagong Hill Tracts; and the conquest of Meherkul, the *pargana* in which the town of Comilla stands, is attributed to Chhethumphā, 95th in the line of kings. The date of his reign can be fixed approximately, as we know that Ratna Mānikya, 5th in descent from him, ruled at the end of the thirteenth century, so that allowing an average of twenty years to a reign, we may assign the entrance of the Tipperas into Comilla to the end of the twelfth century. The Rājmālā † tells the tale of a great battle between the Tipperas and the kings of Gaur in the reign of Chhethumphā. It is said that one Hirābantā, a powerful noble of Bengal, insulted Chhethumphā, who endeavoured to arrest him. Hirābantā took refuge with the lord of Gaur, who, indignant at the attempt to arrest one of his vassals, sent an army against the Tipperas. Chhethumphā himself was terrified at the strength of the opposing forces, and turned back from the field of battle, but his wife, summoning the generals to her side, exclaimed "Fortune favours the brave; I shall go down in person into the field of battle, destroy the foe, and save the honour of our race," and, having first encouraged the panic-stricken troops with a feast of buffalo and goats' flesh, on the morrow led them to battle herself taking her husband in her train. After a terrible struggle the Tipperas were successful. It is possible, but not certain, that this is the war referred to by the Muhammadan historians who relate that in the year 1234 the Muhammadan ruler of Lakhnauti attacked Jājnagar and was utterly defeated. In Stewart's History of Bengal, this Jājnagar is identified with the state of that name in Orissa, but it is at least curious that the date of that defeat should coincide so nearly with that of Chhethumphā's reign.

Chhethumphā.

The connection of the Tipperas with Muhammadan history begins really with the story of Ratnaphā. He was one of the sons

Ratna Mānikya.

* Gazetteer of Sylhet, p. 22.

† I have followed the version of Babu Kailāsh Chandra Singh which differs from that of Mr. Long in Vol. XIX, J. A. S. B.

of Dungurphā, 98th king of Tippera, and being expelled by his brothers went to Lakhnauti, then the Muhammadan capital of Bengal. Here he made friends with Tughril Khān, the Governor, who furnished him with troops, by whose aid he regained the kingdom, killed his brothers, and himself ascended the throne in the year 1278 A.D. Ratnaphā is said to have presented Tughril Khān with a magnificent *Bhek mani* (toad jewel), and in return received the title of Mānikya, which has ever since been borne by the Rājās of Tippera. It is noticeable that his own name means 'jewel of heaven,' phā (heaven) being the usual affix to the names of the Ahom kings of Assam, and adopted by many of the kings of Tippera before they took the title of Mānikya.

Ratna Mānikya was succeeded by his son Pratāp Mānikya, in whose reign Sultān Sikānder Shāh of Sonargāon invaded Tippera in quest of elephants.

A few years later, in 1347 A.D., a Muhammadan ruler of Bengal, Sultān Iliās Shāh, otherwise known as Shamshuddin, again invaded Tippera and defeated the Rājā. For the next century the Muhammadans appear to have made frequent raids into Tippera, but did not obtain any permanent footing, and about the middle of the fifteenth century Rājā Dharma Mānikya invaded Bengal and plundered Sonargāon. He was one of the most famous of the Rājās of Tippera, and is said to have travelled in disguise as a *fakir* through many parts of India and to have made extensive grants of land to Brahmans who settled in his dominions. The big tank in Comilla, known as the Dharma Sāgar, is called after him. In the reign of Dhanya Mānikya at the beginning of the sixteenth century Tippera was invaded by Sultān Husain Shāh of Gaur; twice he was defeated near Comilla by the Tipperas, who dammed up the Gumti and then let loose its waters as the Sultān's troops approached, but entering the district a third time he built a fort at Kailārghar (Kasba), and in the battle that followed was successful. The "Rājmālā" makes out that the Tipperas were victorious all through, and ascribes their success in part to the propitiation of the goddess by human sacrifices. Such sacrifices seem to have been extraordinarily common in Tippera, for it is recorded in praise of Dhanya Mānikya that he directed that human sacrifices should be offered only every three years, whereas in ancient times one thousand victims used to be sacrified annually. About the year 1512 Deb Mānikya took Chittagong, but was subsequently defeated there by the troops of Sultān Nasrat Shāh. Bijay Mānikya was a powerful ruler in the middle of the sixteenth century, he took Chittagong and defeated the Mughals at Sonargāon. It was in his time that Ralph Fitch travelled through Tippera and wrote:—"The Mogen which be of the kingdom of Recon and Rame, be stronger than the king of Tippara; so that Chattigan, or Porto Grando, is often times under the king of Recon." At the beginning of the seventeenth century the

Arakanese took Chittagong and plundered Tippera as far as Udaipur but were defeated about the year 1612 by the Mughals in the plains of Noakhāli. At this time the famous Isā Khān, the Afghān lord of Sonargāon, and nominally a vassal of the Mughal empire, had possessed himself of large estates on the east of the Meghnā, but the Rājās of Tippera remained independent. The Bengal troops were defeated by Rājā Rājdhar Mānikya who reigned in 1611—1613, but the Emperor Jahāngir demanded tribute of his successor Jasadhar Mānikya, who was defeated by the Mughal troops under Nawāb Fateh Jang and sent a prisoner to Delhi. In 1625 Kalyān Mānikya became Rājā and for some time successfully defied the Mughals but eventually had to submit to Sultān Shujā. Until the end of the seventeenth century Tippera remained subject to the Mughal yoke, the Rājās being made and unmade at the pleasure of the Muhammadan governors, but Ratna Mānikya the Second (1684—1712) made himself virtually independent, and it was not until the reign of Dharma Mānikya* (1714—1732) that the Mughal troops guided by a nephew of the Rājā penetrated as far as the capital, and the province of Tippera was then finally annexed to the Mughal empire. In 1760 the British troops from Chittagong invaded Tippera in support of the Mughals and established Krishna Mānikya on the *gadi*, and in 1765 Tippera came under the control of the East India Company.

The following account of the Mughal conquest and of the events that followed is translated from the will of Mirza Sultān Khān of Homnābād executed in the year 1788 A.D. :—

"Be it known that when the Emperor, Dispenser of Justice, Defender of the Faith, Shadow of God, of Darius like dignity, and of Alexander like grandeur, *viz.*, Shāh Ālam Bahādur Shāh, may God illumine his grave, acceded to the throne of the possessions and occupations of the Empire of Delhi, he sent the ornament of the Empire, protector of the world Prince Jahāndar Shāh known as Shāhzāda Amir Āgon Khān, who was one of his nearest relatives, to the country of Bengal, for the purpose of administration and management of Government affairs, and that Prince was the son of the cherisher of faith, ornament of kingdom, Prince Abdul Aziz: and Prince Abdul Aziz was descended from the dynasty of the Abbaside Caliphs and had married the fortunate daughter of the brother of the Emperor of India. In those days the fame of the excellence of the elephants of the Hills of Tippera had spread far and wide, and the depredations, outrages, disputes, affrays, tyrannies, and oppressions, of the offenders and malefactors of Tippera became known and people of that place had made complaints before His Majesty the Emperor of Hindustan. The

* These dates are most uncertain. The author of the Rājmālā gives the date of the conquest as 1732, and Stewart's History of Bengal, but the account that follows gives a different version.

great Emperor on hearing of the excellence of the elephants and the complaints of the oppressions made by the seekers of justice issued his peremptory order shedding a lustre like the rays of the sun to the effect that Prince Jahāndar should proceed to the country of Bengal with a large army and do his business thoroughly. According to the Imperial order Prince Jahāndar accompanied by his son Prince Humayun arrived in pomp in Tippera in the holy year of the Hijra of the Prophet 1126 and by the terror of his administration bestowed peace and order on the country and he removed the stain of intrigue and rebellion from the mirror of the country and its neighbourhood by the polish of his justice and clemency and rendered the land like an enchanting and pleasing garden, and by the rain of his generosity from the cloud of his mercy and justice added to it new prosperity and verdure. Inasmuch as Tippera was a lovely and pleasant place and its climate pleased and attracted his generous temperament, therefore for a long time he resided in that place and engaged himself in touring and hunting. During the period of his stay he made peace with Rājā Ratan Mānik II, who was then Rājā of Hill Tippera, and the Rājā was honoured and gratified by the kindness and friendship of the Prince. With the help of the Rājā he tamed several good looking elephants, and taking with himself those elephants for presentation to the Emperor he returned to Delhi. His son Prince Amir Mirza Humayun Khān, known as Shāhzāda Bahroz Khān, who was like a sun illuminating a kingdom and high placed like Jamshīd, took his residence in Tippera in the year 1135 of Hijra in the *mauza* where his noble father had stayed and governed for such time, and he named this *mauza* after his own illustrious name Humayunābād, and in the year 1136 the zamindāri of Humayunābād, etc., was granted to Prince Amir Humayun Khān by the then Emperor of India through intercession of his noble father. In 1145 Hijra several *Chaklas* were established for the management of the Imperial troops and militia in the country of Bengal. Jahāngirnagar is one of these *Chaklas* and Tippera was placed subordinate to it. The Prince had engaged a large number of persons who were known by the title of *kōch* for the protection and reformation and preservation of his zamindāris so that the country may be protected from the wickedness and attack of malefactors and vagabonds. He granted to them free lands for their maintenance. The Prince constructed roads and bridges in his zamindāri and jurisdiction and excavated reservoirs and large tanks and then abandoned this transitory earth for the permanent world."

Early British administration.

The East India Company on their first accession to the *diwāni* in the year 1765 made no attempt to change the existing system, but continued to collect the revenues and administer the districts through the medium of the native officers of the Nawāb. In 1769 a supervisor was appointed to the charge of the province

of Dacca, which included apparently the whole of the present district of Tippera, except the strip on the east corresponding to Chakla Roshnābād, which was in the possession of the Rājā of Tippera, and under the supervision of the Chief at Chittagong. In the year 1772 the Directors of the Company determined to stand forth in their capacity of *diwān* and administer the country directly through their own officers. The revenue collections at Dacca were then placed in charge of a Collector, and we find in the 'Plan for the Management of the Revenues of Bengal and Bihar,' dated 23rd November 1778, that the control of the Dacca division was vested in a Provincial Council, but the districts of Chittagong and Tippera were "left on their former footing under the management of a Chief." The correspondence in the Tippera Collectorate dates only from the year 1776, when Mr. Campbell was deputed from Chittagong as Resident at Tippera, which then included the present State of Hill Tippera as well as Chakla Roshnābād. On the division of the district of Dacca, the northern part of the present Tippera district, including *pargana* Sarāil,* was assigned to Sylhet, and the portions lying south of this and east of the Meghnā to Dacca and Mymensingh. In the re-distribution of the districts made in 1787, the President of the Board of Revenue wrote :—

"With respect to Tippera, considering the character of the Rājā, the situation of the country, its actual distance from Chittagong, and the improvement of the revenue by European management, the Board may perhaps think the continuance of such an establishment (Collectorate) there necessary, but in that case I would propose that it should be under the charge of an assistant, and considered as a part of the Chittagong Collectorship in the same manner as heretofore." This arrangement was approved, and the First Assistant to the Collector of Chittagong was appointed to be Resident at Tippera.

In 1787 Mr. Paterson was deputed to enquire into the distress in the Mymensingh division, and into the complaints made by the *raiyāts*, especially as to "Buldacaul" (now called Bardakhāt) in the district of Dacca, and to ascertain the actual effect of the inundations in the eastern districts. On the strength of his report *parganas* Buldacaul and Ganga Mandal were transferred from the charge of the Collector of Mymensingh to that of the Resident at Tippera. Mr. Paterson was not satisfied with what he considered 'half measures' and urged strongly that *parganas* Dāūdkāndi and Bhullua should be added to those already in charge of the Resident to form a compact district. Mr. Buller, the Resident, endorsed these recommendations, and his views were accepted by the Board, with the result that in the year 1790 the district of Tippera was

* It was transferred to Mymensingh in 1795, *vide* Settlement Report of 1893.

formed, and after some further adjustments made in 1793 comprised approximately the present district of Tippera (except *parganas* Sarāil, Dāūdpur, Haripur and Bejra in the north) together with the mainland of Noakhāli. In 1821 Noakhāli was formed into a district in charge of a Collector, though the Judge of Tippera continued to exercise jurisdiction throughout its mainland until 1877 A.D. In 1830 *parganas* Sarāil, Dāūdpur, Haripur, Bejra and Satarakhandal were transferred from Mymensingh to Tippera, but the last named has since been included in Sylhet. In 1860 the subdivision of Nasirnagar, now called Brāhmanbāriā, was formed, and in 1879 the south-western *thānās* were included in the Chāndpur subdivision. In 1875 *thānā* Chhāgalnaiya in the south-east of Tippera, and forming the southern division of Chakla Roshnābād, was transferred to Noakhāli.

In the years 1873 and 1875 the boundary between Tippera and Noakhāli was re-adjusted, resulting in the transfer of 64 square miles to the latter district; since then the only changes in the Collector's jurisdiction have been the transfer in 1882 of a few villages from Noakhāli, and exchanges of a few practically uninhabited *chars* on the Meghnā between Tippera and the contiguous districts.

Commissionership.

Down to 1875 Tippera was in the sixteenth division under the Commissioner of Circuit at Chittagong, it was then transferred to the Dacca division, but re-transferred to Chittagong in 1880.*

Civil and criminal jurisdiction.

Theoretically the Mughal system for the administration of justice was complete. The *zamindārs* and *chaudhris* of the *parganas* were responsible for the maintenance of peace, for the arrest of criminals, and for the restitution of property stolen. The *faujdārs* of the *thānās*, or garrison posts, had magisterial powers and the governor or *Nāzim* of the province tried capital offences personally or by deputy. The *Diwān* at Dacca was judge in all cases, civil or criminal, relating to land, and the *kāzis* of the several *parganas* had the usual powers of an ecclesiastical court. In the last days of the dominion of the Nawābs of Murshidabad this system broke down. The farmers who had been placed in possession of the estates of defaulting *zamindārs* usurped and used or neglected to their own advantage the powers of both *zamindārs* and *faujdārs*, and justice was not to be had.

In the Regulations of 1772 the President and Council endeavoured to remedy this state of affairs. They established for every district a criminal court in which the *kāzi* and *mufti* with two *maulavis* should sit and expound the law, and determine how far the delinquents were guilty of a breach of it, while the Collector was to supervise the proceedings and execute their judgments and orders; and a civil court in which the Collector should preside

* Notifications of 15th July 1875 and of 16th August 1880.

and try cases in open court. In 1774 the administration of civil justice was transferred from the Collector to a native officer, the *āmil*, and that of criminal justice to the *faujdār* of the *thānā*, but from a letter of 9th November 1775 it seems that no *faujdār* had then been appointed to the Dacca division, and it does not appear when the appointment was made.

By the Orders of the 11th April 1780 a Company's servant under the title of 'Superintendent of *Diwāni Adālat*' was appointed to preside in the civil court at Dacca, and a year later was vested with the magisterial power of apprehending dacoits and persons charged with commission of crimes or acts of violence within his jurisdiction, and committing them for trial to the *daroga* of the nearest *faujdāri*.

As regards Tippera, the jurisdiction seems at that time to have remained with the Chief at Chittagong, but a letter of 1782 refers to the "Court of Adālat at Turruf," *i.e.*, Sylhet. In 1787 the courts were re-organised, Tippera being included in the jurisdiction of the court of Islāmābād (Chittagong), while the western part of the present district was in the jurisdiction of a court at the town of Dacca; and the Collectors of Chittagong, Dacca, and Mymensingh were vested with the powers of magistrates within their respective jurisdictions. They were to arrest offenders, and try petty cases, and commit more serious ones for trial by the *darogas* at the *faujdāri* courts in their districts. At the same time a revised and fuller Code of Civil Procedure was promulgated and the Collectors were made Judges of the District Courts. Further changes were made in 1790 when the *faujdāri* courts were abolished and their powers transferred to the courts of circuit. A Civil Judge for the district of Tippera was appointed first under Regulation III of 1793, and was vested with the power of a magistrate under Regulation IX of the same year. Petty civil suits were then tried by native commissioners, while certain classes of civil cases, all serious criminal cases, and the appeals from the decisions of the district were heard by the Provincial Courts of Appeal and Circuit at Dacca. This system continued with small changes till 1829, when the courts of appeal and circuit were abolished, their functions as courts of circuit transferred to the newly created Commissioners of Divisions, and their appellate powers to the Central Courts in Calcutta. Two years later the criminal and civil jurisdiction of the Commissioners was transferred to the Judge. In 1831 the magisterial functions of the Judges were transferred to the Collectors of the districts. In 1837 it was decided to separate the offices of Collector and Magistrate, the magisterial duties being performed by Joint Magistrates under the supervision of the Judge. This was the system until 1859, when the offices of Magistrate and Collector were combined and have remained so till the present date.

State of the country.

The correspondence throws some light on the condition of the district at and before the time of the permanent settlement. Year after year the embankment on the Gumti gave way, causing widespread disaster. In 1784 Mr. Leake found only one-fourth of the country cultivated, though there were signs that it had been formerly as prosperous as any part of Bengal. The *raiyāts* were nomadic in their habits, wandering from place to place and paying rent only for what they actually cultivated.

Crime was unchecked. In 1790 Mr. Buller, the Collector, complained that his own cook-boat had been plundered by river dacoits on the Meghnā, and stated that when travelling in those parts he had often seen these robbers seize upon some wretched boat and plunder it.

The *zamindār's* attitude towards the Collector was commonly one of mistrust and defiance, and so far from aiding in the preservation of peace many of them seem to have been in league with the dacoits.

Slavery.

Slavery was common in the district until the middle of the nineteenth century; indeed one of the principal reasons put forward in 1789 by Mr. Paterson for the formation of the district of Tippera was the necessity of checking the sale and exportation of children as slaves. "This practice," he said, "was of long standing, but the distress of the parents and their inability to provide their offspring during the inundation and famine of 1191 and 1194 B.S. made it almost universal." In 1866 Mr. J. F. Browne wrote as follows:—

"The purchase of slave girls was at one time very common in this district, and the price paid was from 30 to 100 rupees. The male offspring of such women were called Golams, and were kept in a state of servitude. Of late, owners of Golams have failed to retain them in captivity, and many of the so-called Singhs and Deos are nothing more or less than slaves or their immediate descendants. They are often also the illegitimate sons of their former masters, and not unfrequently assume the same caste appellation. The female slaves, and their female offsprings very rarely attempt to escape, and, as they are on the whole kindly treated, would be very foolish to do so. I am given to understand that the purchase of female slaves is now so difficult a matter and so likely to bring trouble on those concerned in the transaction, that the practice is fast falling into disuse, though it cannot be said to have quite died out."

External aggression.

The Mutiny of 1857 left Tippera untouched. In November of that year a panic was caused temporarily by the news that three companies of mutineers from Chittagong were marching northwards through Hill Tippera. Accompanied by a number of escaped convicts and hill tribesmen they passed Udaipur, but finding the road to Comilla blocked by police and the Rājā's men turned back into the hills and continued to march in a northerly

direction, only entering the plains for a few miles. The alarm soon abated, but nearly a year later the arrival of a boat laden with salt defiled with some yellow substance gave rise to a suspicion that Government was trying to ruin the Hindus' caste and nearly led to serious disturbances; fortunately the Collector was able to explain that the substance found in the salt was only pitch that had oozed from the seams of the boat. In January 1860 some 500 to 1,000 Kukis of the Riang tribe, who had been marauding in Hill Tippera, descended suddenly into the plains of Chhāgalnaiya, sacked and burnt fifteen villages, killed over 185 British subjects, and carried off others, causing damage valued altogether at a lakh of rupees. Police were hurried to the spot, and troops obtained from Dacca, but the Kukis retreated after two days, and it was necessary to send a punitive expedition to punish them. This is the last occasion on which the district was troubled by external aggression.

On the division of Bengal on the 16th October 1905 Tippera fell to the new province. This measure was followed by an agitation which took the form of opposition to all administration and of a boycott of goods of British manufacture. The conduct of the agitators led to serious rioting between Hindus and Muhammadans at Mogra Hāt early in the year 1907, and with the shooting of a Muhammadan in the streets of Comilla the relations between the two sections of the community became so strained that it was necessary to quarter a detachment of military police in the district, and they were kept there until the year 1909 when the agitation had died out.

Era.

The era now in general use is the Bengali era, of which the year 1316 began on the 14th April 1909, but in Tippera another era, known as the Tippera *San*, is found. According to tradition this dates from the year 591 A.D., when a king of Tippera led a conquering expedition to the west of the Ganges; but Babu Kailāsh Chandra Singh in his "Rājmālā" points out that in the old grants and seals of the rājās of Tippera up to the seventeenth century the Sakābda era was used, and he suggests that the Tippera *san* is really derived from the Muhammadan era, Hijri, with some accidental variation. In *pargana* Sarāil another era, called the *parganati san*, is found in all old documents; it commences from the year 1199 A.D. and may afford a clue to the date of the establishment of Muhammadan influence in that area. The conquest of Bengal took place about the year 1199, though it is improbable that Muhammadan dominion was established as far east as Sylhet at that early date.

Places of Interest.

There are no buildings in the district of great antiquity or of much archæological interest. Scattered throughout the district are numerous mosques and Hindu temples (*math*), but most of them are of recent date. The most imposing is the Satara Ratna temple in Comilla (*vide* frontispiece) built in the time of Raja

Krishna Mānikya—sixteenth or seventeenth century. In Sarāil there is a mosque erected in the year 1670 A.D. by the wife of Nur Muhammad, *Diwān* of the *pargana*. Near Comilla stands a mosque known as the Shuja Masjid, which was erected by Govinda Mānikya in the seventeenth century in return for a sword presented to him by the Emperor Shāh Shuja. In Chāndina, which was identified by Ramesh Chandra Datta with the former capital of the kingdom of Kamalanka, on the northern bank of a large tank there are some ruins which may possibly be those of the old palace of the Rājās, on the opposite bank are the more modern ruins of a *rājbāri* erected in the Mughal times. At Kailārghar near Kasba just across the border vestiges may still be seen of the camp in which Husain Shāh fortified himself during his campaign at the beginning of the sixteenth century. In 1875 when a road was being built through the Mainamāti hills, the ruins of a small fort were discovered buried in dense jungle on the highest point of the range. The fort was built of brick, rectangular in shape and about 200 yards square, and not far from it were found some handsomely cut Hindu statues of aboriginal type, the pig being introduced in the bas-relief and the snake also figuring in the groups. There are legends of a great battle in this neighbourhood between the invading Muhammadan forces and the Tipperas, a battle which was most likely fought during the invasions in the thirteenth century. A curious, though modern, building is the Dolamāncha standing in Mediār Hāor in *pargana* Sarāil. This is a three-storied brick building which was constructed by the *gowalas* of Narsinagar and other villages about the middle of the nineteenth century and contains a huge idol of Kāl Bhairab fifteen feet high. It is now used chiefly for public amusements during the *Holi* festival, when boat races and athletic sports are held in its vicinity. But the most permanent and authentic monuments of the old rulers of the country are the great tanks excavated along the principal roads. The Dharma Sāgar, the finest tank in Comilla, was made by Rājā Dharma Mānikya; the Kalyān Sāgar at Kasba, named after Kalyān Mānikya who ruled between 1625 and 1659, is another magnificent sheet of water, the Gunsāgar in Jajiara perpetuates the name of the consort of Gobinda Mānikya who succeeded Kalyān Mānikya, and his successor gave his name to the Rāmsāgar of Maijhkar, and the Jagannāth Dighi, the largest of all, commemorates a son of Kalyān Mānikya.

CHAPTER III.

THE PEOPLE.

GROWTH OF POPULATION.

In 1858 the District Magistrate put the population of Tippera at a little over a million souls, and a house to house enumeration made during the revenue survey (1861—64) showed 717,470 inhabitants living in 143,512 houses. Considering the opportunities afforded by the survey, these figures differ inexplicably from those of the census held in 1872 which disclosed a population of 1,533,931 living in an area of 2,656 square miles. Subsequent re-adjustments of the boundary between Tippera and Noakhāli led to a decrease of 30 square miles in the area of the former district, and from the 1st January 1876 Chhāgalnaiya *thānā* with an area of 131 square miles was transferred to Noakhāli. The census of 1881 showed 1,519,338 persons living in the district. Between 1881 and 1891, 10 villages with an aggregate population of about 5,000 persons were transferred from the jurisdiction of *thānā* Nabinagar to the Mymensingh district. In 1891 the population was found to be 1,782,935 persons living in an area of 2,492 square miles. In 1898 two uninhabited *chars* with an area of 8 square miles were transferred from the district of Faridpur to Tippera, and 6 others having an aggregate area of a little over a square mile and only 19 inhabitants were transferred from Tippera to Dacca. The area in 1901 thus stood at 2,499 square miles, and the population as enumerated in the census of that year was 2,117,991 persons. Making necessary adjustments for the variations in area the increase of population at the last three censuses was 7·1 per cent. at the first, 17·8 per cent. at the second, and 18·8 per cent. at the third. The population, it will be seen, has grown steadily and with ever increasing rapidity. This growth has been practically independent of immigration and must be attributed to the well-being and prosperity of the people, and the general healthiness of the district. The first and second of these decades were periods of prosperity uninterrupted by any widespread failure of crops, or other calamities, and in the last decade crops were good in seven out of the ten years. In 1893 a cyclone and heavy floods destroyed a great part of the harvest and caused general scarcity, although there was no actual famine. In 1896 the early cessation of the rains again injured the harvest, and there was a good deal of distress until the *aus* crop was reaped in the succeeding year. Cholera prevailed in a severe form in 1893, 1895, 1896 and 1900, and the Civil Surgeon was of opinion that the health of the district for the ten years before the last census had not been good. The increase of the population in spite of these drawbacks is truly remarkable, and shows how great its capacity for growth must be in favourable circumstances.

In 1901 a little less than 57,000 people born outside the district were found in Tippera. Of these 12,000 came from the adjacent district of Noakhāli, and 25,000 from the Dacca Division, about 4,000 from Bihar, and 8,000 from Assam, which probably means in this case Sylhet. The number of the emigrants was 1,200 less than that of the immigrants: 12,000 of them were found in Hill Tippera, 40,000 in the neighbouring districts, and 3,000 in more distant parts. A great deal of the migration is purely temporary, as may be gathered from the small proportion of women, but the 12,000 people found in Hill Tippera appear to have taken up land and settled there, and the same is the case with the Sylhetis found in the Tippera district. Emigration and immigration.

The following table will show the local variations in density and in increase of population, and illustrate the account that follows:—

Sub-division and Thānā.	Area in square miles.	Population.	Percentage of variations.		Density per square mile.	Percentage of Hindus to total.
	...	1901	1891-1901	1881-1891	1901	1901
District Total ...	2,499	2,117,991	+18·8	+17·8	848	29·38
Sadr sub-division ...	1,142	957,699	+16·6	+16·7	839	24·05
Comilla ...	180	177,458	+12·4	+13·3	986	25·89
Dāūdkāndi ...	205	206,414	+19·3	+20·7	1,007	21·71
Morādnagar ..	225	204,715	+15·7	+16·1	910	31·68
Chāndina ...	172	110,707	+18·6	+18·8	644	24·82
Chaudagrām ...	163	133,558	+14·5	+13·1	819	25·04
Lāksām ...	197	124,847	+20·7	+19·0	634	16·93
Brāhmanbāriā subdivision.	769	677,084	+14·7	+11·9	880	39·54
Brāhmanbāriā ...	379	300,934	+14·4	+11·2	794	43·76
Kasbā ...	157	143,638	+12·8	+11·5	915	45·07
Nabinagar ...	238	232,512	+16·3	+13·6	998	30·67
Chāndpur subdivision ...	588	483,208	+30·0	+30·8	822	25·70
Chāndpur ...	215	208,944	+36·8	+23·6	972	29·69
Hājiganj ...	224	138,610	+26·8	+22·5	619	22·72
Matlab Bāzār ...	149	135,654	+23·9	+34·3	910	22·62

In the last two decades the increase of population has been greatest in the south and west of the district. In the Chāndpur subdivision the percentage of increase in either period was 30·8 and 30, while in the Brāhmanbāriā subdivision the percentages are 11·9 and 14·7. In the *Sadr* subdivision Dāūdkāndi on the Meghnā heads the list, and next comes Lāksām in the south at the junction of the Chittagong, Noākhāli, and Chāndpur lines. It is very difficult to account satisfactorily for these variations. In his report on the census of 1891 the Magistrate attributed the unusual rate of increase in the Chāndpur subdivision to the prosperity of the agriculturists due to the fertility of the soil and the rarity of failure of crops, and secondly to the reclamation of waste lands and jungles and the formation of large *chars* in the Meghnā on which people from the neighbouring districts were settling in large numbers. In Dāūdkāndi also and in Nabinagar (the only *thānā* of the northern division in which the rate of increase was above the normal) the Magistrate attributed it in a great measure to the reclamation of waste lands and the settlement of the *chars* in the Meghnā; and he pointed also to the effect of jute in adding to the wealth of the country and encouraging extension of cultivation.

In 1901 the District Magistrate stated that the western *thānās* had advantages over the eastern, being suited to the growth of jute and stimulated by the trade in that article, having facilities for export and containing more waste land suited for cultivation. He considered that they also gained on the whole in the alluvion and diluvion that is ever going on by the banks of the Meghnā. The eastern *thānās*, he said "not only lack these advantages, but lose a portion of their population in emigration to Hill Tippera." It is doubtful, however, whether these arguments will hold water. The proportion of cultivated to total area in the Chāndpur subdivision is little less than that in Brāhmanbāria, and much greater than that in the *Sadr* subdivision. Jute is grown most largely in Brāhmanbāria, and is exported by boat along the tributaries of the Meghnā, and since 1895 the northern merchants have had access to the railway at Akhāura. Accretion no doubt has had an important bearing on the growth of the population; for the apparent density of population in Dāūdkāndi is 1,008 per square mile, and in Nabinagar 998 to the square mile, and it seems highly improbable that the population could continue to increase at the rates recorded when that density had been reached; the alternative is to suppose that considerable areas not included in the survey totals for the *thānā* have come under cultivation. Perhaps, however, the most important factor in determining these variations has been the constitution of the population. The Muhummadans, allowing widows to remarry and on the whole more robust than their Hindu fellows, tend to multiply faster as will be apparent from an examination of the census figures.

The Hindus, who in 1872 formed 35·2 per cent. of the population, were only 31·2 per cent. in 1891, and ten years later were only 29 per cent. In Kasbā which stands at the bottom of the list in the matter of increase, the Hindus formed over 45 per cent. of the population and in Brāhmanbāria nearly 44 per cent; in Dāūdkāndi they were less than 23 per cent., and in Lāksām under 18.

Religions. In 1901 the census showed 70·5 per cent. of the population to be Muhammadans, all Hanifis of the Sunni sect; 29 per cent. were Hindu, mostly Vaishnabs. The Namasudras and Kaibarttas are all followers of Vishnu and only a few Sāktas are to be found among the higher castes. Christians and Buddhists make up the other half per cent. No Jews, Jains, Parsis, or animists appear in the schedules.

Hindu castes. The most important Hindu castes in the district are Brāhmans (35,000), Kāyasths (70,000), Jogi or Jugi (68,000), Kaibarttas (72,000), Namasudras (115,000), Nāpits (25,000), Sunri or Shāhā (44,000).

Brāhmans. The number of Brāhmans increased by nearly 13 per cent. between 1881 and 1901, and the apparent decrease in their numbers at the intermediate census is accounted for by the fact that the degraded Brāhmans were then shown under separate castes. Of the 35,500 Brāhmans, about 7,000 are Barna Brāhmans ministering to inferior castes, and over 3,000 are classed as Daibajna (astrologers, etc.) Most of the Brāhmans belong to the Rārhi division of the caste, but Bārendra and Baidik Brāhmans are also found. Kulin families are few owing to the fact that a Kulin Brāhman crossing to the east of the Meghnā and settling in Tippera would lose his status. It is said that Brāhmans do not cultivate land themselves, but either let it or employ hired labourers. The Barna and Daibajna Brāhmans rank below Baidyas and Kāyasths in the social scale.

Baidyas, Kāyasths and Sudras. It is convenient to take these three castes together, because they are closely connected and because it is obvious that there have been changes in their classification at the last two censuses.

Taken together, they number over 96,000 and had increased by 7½ per cent. in the last decade. In the Brāhmanbāria and *Sadr* subdivisions Baidyas and Kāyasths intermarry, the children following the caste of the father, but this practice does not prevail in the Chāndpur subdivision; the consequence being that the Baidyas and Kāyasths of Chāndpur and the western districts have no connection with those of the other two subdivisions. Occasionally Baidyas and Kāyasths give their daughters in marriage to Shāhā or Sunris, though they cannot themselves marry women of that caste without losing their own. Notwithstanding this intermarriage the social superiority of the Baidyas of Tippera over the Kāyasths is unquestioned.

Sudras, or Ghulām Kāyasths were shown in the last census to number 22,000. The Collector reported* that there were large communities of persons, chiefly with the surname 'De', in the north of the district, who called themselves Kāyasths, and had been recognised in deeds as such, but were not admitted unless exceptionally well-to-do or well educated into the society of high class Kāyasths. In 1891 most of them appear to have been classified as Kāyasths, but in 1901 in spite of their protests they were shown as Sudras. The theory of their origin generally accepted is that they are descended from slaves, who were to be found in well-to-do households till well on into last century. They follow generally the customs of the Kāyasths, and some of them intermarry and become absorbed into the lower ranks of the real Kāyasths, of whom there are said to be 80 sub-castes.

The Jugis numbering 68,000 are a caste of weavers, and have increased by over 22 per cent. since 1881. Many of them hold land, and they are generally well off. In most matters they follow correct Hindu ceremonial, and like the Brāhmans their period of mourning is ten days, but they bury their dead. Brāhmans will not take water at their hands, and they do not employ Brāhmans but have priests of their own caste styled Mahātmās or Goswāmīs. In the last census these priests claimed that they should be called Jugis' Brāhmans, and the Magistrate reported that they formed a separate community. Most Jugis call themselves Nāth, and those who are educated Pandit-Nāth. A few Jogis, who are mendicant priests, appear to have been classed in the census with the Jugis. Other weaving castes are Kapālis, who make gunny bags (about 11,000), and Tāntis, cotton weavers of a higher social position (about 1,300).

Kaibarttas (71,700) have increased by 42½ per cent. since 1881. They are supposed to be among the earliest inhabitants of Eastern Bengal, but their origin is wrapped in obscurity. They are divided into two main classes, the Hālia Dās or cultivators, and the Jelia or fishermen. They do not intermarry or eat together, and are to all intents and purposes separate castes. The Hālia Dāses hold a superior social position and made at the last census a strenuous effort to be recognised as Māhisyas but this was not allowed. Recently, however, the title of Mahisya has come into general use. Neither widow marriage nor divorce obtains in either caste, but it is not considered degrading for a Kaibartta widow to remain under the protection of a man as his mistress. Brāhmans do not take water from the hands of a Kaibartta.

The Namasudras, or Chandāls as they used to be called, number over 115,000, and increased by 39 per cent. in the 20 years preceding 1901. They are the principal race caste of Eastern Bengal where they had settled before the dawn of its history.

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* The information concerning castes is taken chiefly from the Census Reports of 1891 and 1901.

They stand very low in social scale, but are an industrious and rising section of the community, and to be found as boatmen, cultivators, shopkeepers, carpenters, and even fishermen. Even a Kāyasth or a Baidya will not take water from them, and the Brāhmans, who minister to them, rank below all others. Their period of mourning is ten days as in the case of Brāhmans. Widow marriage once universally prevalent among them has been discontinued, and divorce is not allowed. It is said that having obtained recognition as Namasudras, they are now inclined to drop the first half of the name and call themselves Sudras.

Shāhās.

The Shāhās or Sunris numbering 44,200 are a trading caste dealing in grain, salt, and country produce. They form the most prosperous class in the district, and increased by 34 per cent. in the 20 years before the last census. They do not as a rule plough land themselves, but hold many intermediate tenures, and are sometimes considerable proprietors. Of late years there has been a tendency with those who have made money to buy landed properties and dropping the title of Shāhā call themselves Ray or Chaudhuri. At the last census their Brāhmans objected to being classed as fallen, Barna, Brāhmans, but the objection was over-ruled. The Magistrate noted that Shāhās were said to pay Rs. 50 to the pleaders at one of the district munsifis to have the title Rai given them in the plaints they filed, while a Shāhā at Brāhmanbāria applied to the Municipality to have his name entered as Rai in the Municipal books in recognition of a sum he spent for the public benefit.

Nāpits.

Nāpits or barbers numbering 25,000 hold a respectable position in the Hindu community. They object very strongly to the use of the name 'nāpit,' which they allege to be a term of abuse, and claim to be called Sil.

Other castes.

Other important castes are the Dhobas or washermen (19,000), who rank low in the social scale, Sutradhar or carpenters (15,000), Kumār or potters (11,000), Kāmār or blacksmiths (6,000), Pātni (fishermen and musicians, 7,000), Malo (fishermen 11,000), Bhuinmāli (scavengers 11,000), and Bārui (growers and sellers of betel 13,500). It is noticeable that the better class Bāruis wish to be called Lata Baidyas, and the Lata Baidyas claim to be Kāyasths.

There are over 8,000 Telis (oilmen) and nearly, 6,000 Banik or Gandha-Banik. Many of this latter caste are men of good position and not engaged in trade. They wish to be recognised as Vaishyas, but they do not wear the sacred thread, and their period of mourning is 30 days.

Tipperas.

The number of pure Tipperas in the district was only 915 in 1901. In earlier enumerations they are not distinguished from the Tippera Dās or Kātichhuās, who are said to be Kāyasths who lost caste by association with Tipperas, and have now been shown as Kāllār, 3,921 in number. The Tipperas are settlers from the neighbouring state who used to *jhum* in the Lālmāi hills and the Chāndpur subdivision. They are Hindus and recognised as such.

In 1891 there were found 1,983 Chakmās, an aboriginal tribe of the Chittagong Hill Tracts; but there were none in 1901, and no explanation is to be had of their appearance and disappearance.

The 328 Kochs, mostly in Lāksām, say they came from Cooch Behar, and are doubtless descendants of the guards imported in the eighteenth century by the zamīndār of Homnābād.*

There has been a small Christian community in Comilla since 1857 when the Mahārājā of Tippera gave a valuable piece of land in Khandipur for their use. In 1884 the Baptist Mission of New South Wales established a branch Mission in Comilla chiefly for the evangelisation and education of the lower classes. For about seven years they maintained an Orphanage which has been given up only lately. In Brāhmanbāria the New Zealand Baptist Missionary Society has been working since 1890 chiefly on evangelistic and medical lines, but maintains also some primary schools in Namasudra villages. This Mission extended its operations to Chāndpur in 1896. In 1900 an excellent Mission Hospital was opened there and in January 1910 a fully equipped dispensary, all under the supervision of a qualified Medical Missionary. In 1872 only 70 Christians were found in the district, and the census of 1901 showed 178 Christians, of whom 74 were of European and allied races and 76 were Eurasians.†

The first Brāhma Samāj was established in Comilla in 1854, commencing with only four members, who to avoid the hostility of their orthodox Hindu neighbours called it the *Atmiyā Samāj* or Society of Friends, and only ventured to describe it by its proper name a year later when their numbers had increased. For eleven or twelve years, in spite of much opposition, the society prospered, but when its most influential adherents had left the district, it fell upon evil days and in 1871 numbered only twenty-one members attached to three congregations at Comilla, Brāhmanbāria, and Kāligāchhā. The same three congregations still survive and embrace thirty-two families, but the movement is unpopular, the general tendency being towards a reassertion of caste and strict Hindu ceremonial.

There were 1,340 Buddhists found in 1901, all of them Magh immigrants from Chittagong.

With the exception of some 2,000 Pathāns and as many Saiyids, nearly all the Muhammadans of the district call themselves Sheikh, and are obviously akin to the Hindus. They are all Sunnis and very strict followers of the Prophet. Some who call themselves *Farāzi*, converts to the preaching of the famous Maulāna Kerāmat Ali, are Calvinistic in their denunciation of music and everything even distantly approaching idolatry; and even those who are more liberal *(belāti)* show none of the laxity

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* *Vide* ante page 15.

† I am indebted for this note on Missions to the Rev. W. Barry of Comilla.

observable in the Muhammadan of Northern Bengal, but pray five times a day and fast at the Ramazān. Their dress, the *lungi* and the muslin cap, and speech distinguish them from the Hindus. The Muhammadans are nearly all engaged in agriculture. They look down upon fishing, and few of them take to commerce or the higher professions. In the south they serve as boatmen, but will not do so in Brāhmanbāria, and it is only in the south-west that they will act as porters. In the South-East the Muhammadan immigrants from Chittagong, Chattigrāmis, form a distinct community which does not intermarry with the Danduāsis, or people of Tippera.

Marriage.

Child-marriage is the rule among both Hindus and Muhammadans, and both classes practically buy the bride with a price, though it may be given in the guise of ornaments. In 1893 the Settlement Officer of Sarāil stated that the consideration paid in cash for a bride ranged from Rs. 100 to Rs. 150 among lower class Kāyasths, Nabasāks and Karmakārs, and might be as high as Rs. 1,000 among Brāhmans. Mr. Cumming in his report on Chakla Roshnābād stated that among Hindus of the ordinary cultivating class the cost of marrying a child varied from Rs. 60 to Rs. 150, and that among the higher classes it was the bridegroom who had to be paid for, and among the lower classes the bride. Among Muhammadans the expenses are smaller, but are practically never under Rs. 50, while well-to-do people will spend as much as Rs. 500. The Muhammadans allow widows to remarry, and so in theory do the low caste Hindus, but the Namasudras in their struggle to rise in the social scale are ceasing to marry widows. The Settlement Officer of Sarāil records that it is customary among the Hindus of that part to celebrate the marriage in the bridegroom's house, a custom considered extremely humiliating in other parts of Bengal.

Polygamy is the exception, even among Muhammadans, and the agreements executed by Muhammadans on marriage commonly contain covenants against the taking of a second wife, as well as against desertion and ill usage, and the wife is often given the right to divorce her husband on breach of the conditions. The dower is usually from Rs. 100 to Rs. 400.

LANGUAGE.

The language of Tippera is a debased form of Bengali in which many words of Persian or Arabic origin are used. It is classed by Dr. Grierson as one of the Eastern Bengali dialects.* The pronunciation and the grammar are so peculiar that they present considerable difficulties even to educated Bengalis from the western districts. The inherent 'ă' is usually pronounced like 'o' in not, but sometimes like 'o' in promote. The sound of 'a' in hat is generally given to 'e' unless final, as *gălō* for *gēla*. The aspirate standing by itself or involved in aspirated consonants is often dropped, and so is sometimes an aspirated guttural, as

* Linguistic Survey of India Volume V, page 201.

mit'a for *mithyā*, *zayam dahēn* for *zakham dēkhēn* (see the wound). The letter 's' generally becomes 'h' or may be dropped altogether, thus 'suna' (hear) becomes first 'huna' and then 'una.' If not transposed into 'h' or dropped altogether 's' is pronounced 'sh.' In the middle of a word 'ch' or 'chh' is pronounced as 's,' and at the beginning has a sound between 's' and 'ts.' 'P' is pronounced like 'f,' and in the south like 'h.' Medial 'r' may be dropped, as *kassē* for *kariyāchhē*. The letter 'j' and sometimes even 'dhy,' is pronounced as 'z' as *māize* for *madhye*. The objective commonly ends in 're' or sometimes in 'ra.' The locative ends in *te* or *t*, as *galāt* (on the neck). Verbs generally drop the final vowel in the third person of the past tenses as in *āsil* (he was), *lāgil* (he began); they make their infinitives in 'to' or 'tām,' and the first person future in 'ām,' while the conjunctive participle ends in 'ā,' a contraction for 'iyā'. But it is difficult to parse some of the phrases in common use, such as 'likhibā jāno' meaning 'you know how to write,' or 'kahitām pāritām nā,' meaning 'I cannot, or could not, say'. One peculiarity is the use of the phrase 'bhut' as an equivalent to the English 'I say,' but put after the name of the person addressed; for instance a native of the district might call to a friend 'Kādir Baksh bhut' (I say Kadir Baksh). Not only is the pronunciation bad and uncertain but the spelling, even that of moderately educated persons, is extraordinarily lax, and Mr. Sutherland * in his essay on the dialect of Tippera says that the clerks in the Judge's court habitually committed gross errors. Locally the dialect varies from something like Sylheti in the north to a Chittagonian patois in the south.

The songs sung by the boatmen of the Brāhmanbāria subdivision are curious, differing both in tune and rhythm from ordinary Bengali music, and containing a very high proportion of expressions now obsolete in ordinary speech.

Nowadays the Hindus aspire to speak correct Bengali but the Muhammadan villager is content to use 'Musalmani Bangala' as it is called, introducing as many Persian words as possible; while Urdu forms the medium of polite conversation.

† Among the boys and young men of the upper classes athletic sports, particularly football, though abandoned for a while in favour of *lathi* play, are once more popular. The people are very fond of theatrical performances, which are generally provided at all weddings in well-to-do families; but boat-racing is the characteristic sport of the country, and may be seen at its best at Brāhmanbāria about the month of August. On the day of the races the shops and offices are closed, and the zamindārs and well-to-do cultivators bring their long rowing boats brilliantly painted in red and black and seating from thirty to fifty oarsmen, sometimes even more. As a rule there are no set races, but one boat will challenge

* Vol. XXXV, Calcutta Review.

† This account is taken from a note by Mr. Wares, S.D.O., Brāhmanbāria.

another, and the two race side by side, the crew singing in time to the stroke of their paddles until one or the other falls behind. In 1908, however, there was a race for a gold medal presented by some of the Akhāura jute firms, and the excitement was so great that the police had much difficulty in keeping the peace. Of late years travelling shows from Calcutta come to add to the attractions of the *mela*. The villagers from many miles round attend and *pardah* ladies view the proceedings from behind screens. At other times the customary recreation of the Tippera ryot is visiting the bāzārs, which are held once or twice a week within walking or boating distance of nearly every village. They are fond of music too and may be heard singing as they row or walk, and hold midnight concerts at which they shout the choruses with stentorian and not unmusical voices.

The children in the villages play a variation of the world wide game of shinty with sticks and a ball, but an account of their games has not been written.

Food. The peasant has three meals a day. In the early morning the rice (*pānthā bhāt*) left over from the preceding day is eaten cold with a little salt and some burnt chilis, and perhaps a little fruit, if in season. The midday and evening meals have boiled rice as their foundation, and with this is taken *dāl* of different kinds, or fish, or vegetables. Milk is a luxury and not one of the staple foods, but on festive occasions delicacies of many kinds are prepared, such as fine rice boiled with milk and sugar, or curdled milk with sugar. Tea is now taken in the towns, and outside them by well-to-do persons, but there is little consumption of biscuits or other foreign food.

Dress. The dress of the people is the ordinary *dhuti* and *chādar* of Bengal usually of country woven cotton, but the better class Muhammadans wear wide cotton pants (*pāijāma*) and long coats (*chapkan*). Among the *farāzi* Muhammadans the cloth is worn as a *lungi* wrapped round the loins and not passed between the legs, and has often coloured stripes or checks. Muhammadans wear small skull caps of muslin, but Hindus usually go bareheaded. In the cold weather many bright coloured shawls are worn and give a picturesque appearance to a crowd. Warm vests of English manufacture are popular, and coats and shirts are worn by the well-to-do. Those who can afford it use quilts stuffed with tree cotton (*dhusā*) to wrap themselves in at night, and the poorer use a patch-work covering of old clothes and rags (*kānthā*) for the same purpose.

Furniture. Beds are not in general use, but people sleep on mats, coarse (*chatāi*) or fine (*pāti*), and use a pillow stuffed with cotton or rags. Chairs and tables are the exception; stools and benches will be found in the houses of the well-to-do. For cooking and eating a peasant will have a few earthen pitchers (*kalsi*), three or four

brass *lotās*, and some plates and cups also of brass. Rice is cooked in a brass pot (*deg*), and an iron pan (*karai*) is also required. Muhammadans use earthenware plates and cups.

NTS. The following description refers to the southern portion of the district* :—

"A gold ornament for the nose is *besar*. As it hangs down, with a large fringe in front of the mouth, it is of great inconvenience to the wearer at meal times. Some Muhammadans wear a simple silver nose-ring. Some well-to-do Hindus wear a fringed golden earring, *phuljhumkā*. *Dāna-tābiz* is a neck ornament worn by Hindus. *Bāju* is a plain armlet, usually of gold. *Kalsi* is another armlet, more ornamented, worked in silver. *Bālā* is a simple silver bangle for the wrist. *Bekkhāru* and *gol khāru* are anklets, worked in silver, worn by the well-to-do people. *Churis* of silver or brass are sometimes worn, three on each wrist, in preference to *bālās*. Muhammadan women are fond of wearing plain, round earrings in silver or in brass: sometimes five, one below the other, in the lobe of the ear."

The ornaments in use in the Brāhmanbāria subdivision are described as follows :—

" The women in the household of a well-to-do cultivator wear silver *churis* on the arm weighing from six to eight tolas ; *khāru* on the leg weighing from five to seven tolas; a gold *nāthphul* weighing about one anna of gold; a *shonali* about the neck weighing from 1½ to 2 annas. The women in the household of a poor cultivator wear no ornaments at all. All of them get some ornaments at the time of their marriage, but these they pledge or sell when their husbands are in want."

The dwellings are usually made with wooden supports, interlaced bamboo walls, and roofs of thatching grass laid upon a bamboo frame-work.† In the houses of the well-to-do, the walls are of cane work, or more elaborate bamboo work. There are usually four houses facing one courtyard and outhouses for stores or cattle-sheds. A cultivator with six houses would have round the courtyard two living rooms, one for the male and one for the female members, a cook-shed and a *baithakkhānā* ; and outside a cattle-shed and a rice store house. The plinth is of raised earth, plastered over with mud and cowdung. Roofs of corrugated iron are common, especially in Shābās' houses, and are appreciated as affording the best protection against arson.

* Paragraph 36, report on the Settlement of Chakla Roshnabad.
† Do. 32, do. do.

CHAPTER IV.

PUBLIC HEALTH.

The district of Tippera lies very low, the neighbourhood of Comilla being only 26 feet above mean sea-level and in many parts less than 20 feet. The climate is excessively moist for more than half the year, and the people live in most unsanitary conditions. Their houses grouped together in little clusters barely above flood-level are so surrounded with trees and jungle that sunlight and air can scarcely penetrate to them, while the stagnant pools that abound form an admirable breeding ground for anopheles mosquitoes; and yet the district is by no means unhealthy in comparison with other parts of eastern India.

Vital Statistics.

For the statistics of births and deaths we depend on the village watchman, who in his weekly or fortnightly visits to the police station reports all occurrences of this nature in his beat. As to the total numbers he is fairly reliable, but his classification of diseases is of the vaguest, and the tabulated results must be accepted with caution.

In 1901 the Civil Surgeon expressed the opinion that the health of the district had been bad and pointed to the ever growing proportion of deaths; their number in 1892 was 36,300, and from 1895 to 1899 varied between 46,000 and 50,000 and in 1900 rose to 60,688. Births show an equal rapid increase, from under 52,000 in 1893 to over 83,000 in 1900. It is, however, almost certain that the earlier figures were incomplete, and this opinion receives confirmation from the fact that the increase of population in the decade was 335,000, whereas according to the vital statistics it cannot have exceeded 240,000.

In the five years ending 1902, the average birth rate was just over 37 per thousand of the population and the reported death rate 24. In the next five years nearly 480,000 births and upwards of 325,000 deaths were recorded, equivalent to 38 births and 25 deaths annually per thousand of the mean population calculated on the basis of these figures. In other words, the population is growing at the rate of more than 32,000 per annum.

The years 1905 and 1906 were very unhealthy, both cholera and fever being bad, and the total deaths recorded exceeding 60,000 each year. The year 1907 was fairly healthy, but the effect of the previous season's sickness and scarcity was seen in a greatly reduced birth-rate, a rather exceptional phenomenon. In 1908 the cholera abated, and though there was still a good deal of fever, deaths fell below 51,000, and the net increase in population was nearly 38,000.

The statistics show that the rainy season is the healthiest part of the year, and the cold weather the least healthy. Both cholera and fever obey this general rule, but of course there are exceptions; for instance, January 1908 was a very healthy month, while May 1905 was much the reverse.

Comilla town is the healthiest of the local areas for which statistics are available. There the ratio of deaths for the five years ending 1902 was only 16 per 1,000, and fever is steadily decreasing. Chāndpur town also has a lower death rate than the rural villages, but this is not so much the case in Brāhmanbāria. For the rest the variations are not very marked, though both birth and death rates are higher in the north of the district.

Dāūdkāndi is characterised as the worst spot in the district for cholera and small-pox, though its total death rate is not as high as that of Kasbā or of Brāhmanbāria *thānās*; while Hājiganj and Chāndpur in the south are healthy areas. In 1905 Chāndina was said to be the most unhealthy place in the district.

The general type of malarial fever prevailing in the district is a mild tertian, but in the strip of land between Hill Tippera and the railway line the people suffer from a malignant tertian fever mainly remittent in character. This fever lasts from three to seven days at a time without the temperature dropping below 100°F., and even if quinine is properly administered the patient is said to be liable to relapses which recurring frequently lead to a state of chronic cachexia. A type of fever known as quotidian, which is really a double tertian, is also met with, it is more persistent than the simple tertian but amenable to quinine.

The largest number of deaths from fever recorded in any recent year was over 40,000 in 1905, and the worst outbreak seems to have been in November to January 1904-05, over 14,700 deaths occurring in the three months. The smallest number of deaths attributed to fever was 32,500 in 1907. All this mortality is not due directly and solely to malarial fever; pneumonia is the proximate cause in many cases, and other undiagnosed chills and fevers have a share. The people do little to combat the disease; they have a prejudice against quinine and prefer the ridiculous treatment of the local quack or *kabirāj*, while mosquito nets are seldom to be seen even in middle class houses.*

Cholera is endemic in all parts of the district. In the ten years ending in 1904 it accounted on an average for over 4,600 deaths annually, and in the four succeeding years for 23,500 deaths. It was bad in 1893, 1895, and 1900, but the largest mortality in any year was in 1906, when nearly 9,500 persons died of it. In December 1905 alone nearly 3,000 people died of cholera and over 2,600, in the following month. There seems to be some connection between excessive or untimely rain and these outbreaks, but the year 1900, when the epidemic came suddenly in the autumn, is an exception.

* I find them coming into vogue in many parts, and they are made locally and sold in the Comilla market.—J.E.W.

Small-pox also is endemic, though there have been no very serious outbreaks of it in recent years. The annual deaths from it for the seven years ending in 1908-09, averaged one in every 12,000 inhabitants, and for the seven years before that the number of its victims was yet smaller. (Small-pox and vaccination.)

Vaccination is compulsory in the three municipal towns, and optional in the rural areas. In each of the towns a paid vaccinator is entertained, and for the rural area there are 69 licensed vaccinators with one inspector and three sub-inspectors, all under the control of the Civil Surgeon. There is a good deal of opposition to vaccination on the part of the *farāzi* Muhammadans and of a sect known as Gurusatya, but the annual number of vaccinations is on the increase. In 1908-09, there were 88,000 successful operations, and it is estimated that over one-fifth of the population is now protected.

The people suffer a great deal from itch and other skin diseases, which account for more than a third of the patients treated in the dispensaries. An intestinal worm (*Ascaris lumbricoides*) is also extremely common, especially among children, and accounts for another 50,000 patients. Rheumatic affections are rife, especially in the north-west, and some 29,000 persons are treated annually for dyspepsia and other diseases of the digestive system and 5,000 for dysentery. About 4,000 patients are treated for diseases of the eye, and 7,000 for diseases of the ear. It is noticeable that the number of persons who seek relief from malaria is small, about 17,000 or half the number of deaths are attributed to this disease. (Other diseases.)

The district is not much afflicted with any of the grievous infirmities. In the census of 1901 only 44 insane persons were found, the smallest number in proportion to population of any district of East Bengal.* There were 84 deaf-mutes, 27 lepers, and 85 blind people. None of these figures are noticeable in any way. Goitre and elephantiasis are not common. Phthisis is said to be very common and increasing. (Infirmities.)

There are altogether in Tippera district 25 dispensaries, of which one is a Government police hospital, three municipal hospitals, and twelve are under the control of the District Board, which also contributes to the support of the Faizunnissa Lady Dufferin *zanāna* hospital at Comilla. Besides these there is a dispensary at Sarāil maintained by the Court of Wards; the Nawāb of Dacca has three at Rāmchandrapur, Durlai, and Gauripur; Rājā Binay Krishna Deb maintains one at Jāfirganj, and there are three belonging to the Hill Tippera State. The New Zealand Baptist Mission has a well equipped model cottage hospital at Chāndpur with branch dispensaries at Bohoria and Shilandia from which medicine is distributed once a week. The District Board dispensaries are all managed by committees which are subject to the professional guidance of the Civil Surgeon and the financial and executive control of the Board. The Board keep also one native (HOSPITALS AND DISPENSARIES.)

* My observations have convinced me that the real number is far larger.

doctor in reserve to deal with epidemics and employ more as occasion requires. Of the District Board hospitals only three, those at Comilla, Chāndpur, and Brāhmanbāria, have accommodation for in-patients; they contain beds for 31 men and 9 women and the average daily number in the wards during the year 1908 was 22 men and 4 women. The Comilla female ward was generally full, being indeed much more popular than the Faizunnissa hospital which has 4 beds but only received 9 patients all the year.

The total number of patients treated in the Board's dispensaries in 1908 was 249,000, 166,000 adult males, 25,000 females, and 62,000 children; and another 4,000 women and children were treated at the Faizunnissa hospital. The total expenditure of the Board hospitals for the year was Rs. 26,900. Of this the District Board provided Rs. 13,400 and the three Municipalities Rs. 3,900, Government contributed Rs. 3,000, and Rs. 3,300 was raised by subscriptions. Some of the dispensaries are in suitable buildings but others are in thatched huts with *kāchā* floors and walls. The Faizunnissa hospital also is supported mainly by the Board and Municipality at a cost of about Rs. 1,200 a year. The rest of the dispensaries are independent of the Board and only that at Sarāil and those of the Nawāb of Dacca are under the supervision of the Civil Surgeon, who inspects those in the Chakla Roshnābād estate as adviser to His Highness the Rājā. According to the census returns there are over 2,000 persons in Tippera practising medicine, though only 47 had diplomas. There has no doubt been an increase in the number of qualified practitioners, but the figures must include Baidyas who do not really practise.

The district depends for its water supply on its tanks, of which there is an immense number great and small. Some of them, excavated by the Rājās of Hill Tippera or other great landowners to fulfil some pious vow or in commemoration of some person or episode, are splendid sheets of water. But many of these tanks have been neglected, especially those off the main thoroughfares, and the small pools dug by the villagers are often indescribably foul. Mr. Cumming during the survey of Chakla Roshnābād made a census of the tanks and found in the two northern divisions over 3,600, of which 2,200 were permanent and only 1,500 afforded wholesome water. Tanks become fewer and the proportion of clean ones smaller towards the north of the district. The water-supply of Sarāil *pargana* and in the vicinity of Lāksām is poor; that of Comilla and the south-east fair. As long ago as 1792, we find the Board of Revenue urging the improvement of the water-supply and sanctioning advances for digging and repairing tanks. Nowadays the District Board encourage the reservation of tanks for drinking water, and where they are satisfied that the water-supply needs improvement, Government and the Board will provide two-thirds of the cost of excavating or cleaning a tank to be set apart for drinking. In this way 43 tanks have

been reserved outside the municipal towns; and the Rājā of Hill Tippera, the Court of Wards, and other large proprietors are doing something for the improvement of the water-supply. In former times it was thought improper to excavate tanks in the village sites, and the break-down of this prejudice has contributed to the pollution of the water-supply, but a good many tanks, new as well as old, are to be seen still standing well away from all human habitation. There is said to be in most parts a layer of foul soil, full of decayed vegetable matter, about 15 feet below the surface and about 5 feet thick; and that a tank may hold good water it is necessary either to stop short of this layer or to cut down through it to a sound bottom. Where vegetable growth gives trouble the introduction of tortoises is thought beneficial.

Customs connected with child-birth.

In the north of the district it is customary for pregnant women to eat baked earth, and cakes of this, red or brown, known locally as *pātā chikur*, are to be seen exposed for sale in the markets.

CHAPTER V.

MEASURES, AND PRICES, MATERIAL CONDITION.

The unit of land measure throughout the district is the *kāni* which is subdivided into 80 *karas* or 20 *gandas*, and is itself one-sixteenth of a *dron*, the highest denomination for expressing areas. In some places the *koni*, or quarter *kāni*, is used. In *zamindāri* papers the length and breadth of a field are expressed in *kahāns* and *pans* and their product divided by 7½ gives the number of *kānis*. The *kāni* itself varies very greatly in extent. It differs according to the length of the *nal* or measuring rod, and according to the number of square *nals* that make a *kāni*. There may be 5 × 6 *nals* to the *kāni*, or 10 × 12; the *nal* contains from 6 to 22 cubits (*hāth*), and the cubit may be 18, or 19, or even 22 inches long.

A list of the standard measures in use in 81 *parganas* is given as an Appendix to Mr. Browne's Report on the district, and in 53 the *kāni* is shown as 1 *bigha* 4½ *kathās*, or ·399 of an acre. In several the *kāni* was 1·21 acres and in one 3·56 acres. In the central division of Chakla Roshnābād Mr. Cumming found the *kāni* used by the Rāj to be ·396 acres or 5 × 6 *nals* of 16 cubits of 18 inches; but in the northern division, much of which has been let out to permanent tenure-holders, the *nal* was only 14 cubits and the *kāni* = ·304 acres. It is a common practice for tenure-holders to use a shorter *nal** for the measurement of subordinate holdings than that used by the *zamindārs*, and in the settlement of the Sarāil estates in 1893 it was found necessary to make a distinction between ryoti lands and those of permanent tenure-holders and lakhirajdars, the former being allowed a *kāni* of 120 square *nals* of 6 cubits of 21 inches (= ·304 acres), and the latter a *kāni* of 120 square *nals* of 6½ cubits of 22 inches (= ·4 acres).

In 1888 the Collector gave a list of standard measures, which differs slightly from that given by Mr. Browne; thus it shows the Bardakhāt *kāni* as equal to ·304 acres, whereas Mr. Browne gives 1 *bighā* 1 *kathā* 1½ *chatāks* (·351 acres)—the former seems correct for ryoti holdings—and for Gangamandal the Collector's list gives the *kāni* as ·502 acres, Mr. Browne gives 1·21 acres, and the Settlement Officer in 1897 found ·4 acres to be correct.

Milk, groceries, and generally rice, are sold by the standard seer of 80 tolahs (2·056 lbs. avoirdupois); paddy and other agricultural produce by the seer of 82⅝ tolahs. A seer of 82 tolahs is used in some markets for pulses. Formerly grain was sold by the *kāthā*, a measure of capacity which varied from market to market, but with the advent of the railway this has gone out of use.*

* Mr. Cumming's Report on the Settlement of Chaklā Roshnābād, para. 98.

Pān (betel leaf) sells by the *birā* of 24 or 28 *gandās* (quartettes) of leaves. Many articles are sold by the *gandā*, *pan* and *kāhan*. A *gandā* is four of anything; as a measure of money it meant four cowries (*karā*), and the *karā* is still the basis of fractional calculations. Twenty *gandās* =1 *pan;* and 16 *pans* =1 *kāhan*. Earthwork is measured by the *kuyā*, which is (6 × 12 × 1½) cubic cubits =365 cubic feet.

Rent rates. There appear to be no recognised *pargana* or village rates in the district. In Sarāil in the north of the district the unit is not the village but the *banda*, a portion of the arable lands of the village, and within each *banda* different rates are paid for different descriptions of land, those for arable lands ranging from six annas to Re. 1-4-0 per *kāni*. The average rent for ryoti holdings directly under the zamīndār as settled in 1897 was Rs. 2-2-7 per acre. In Chakla Roshnābād in the east of the district rates varied greatly according to the quality of the land and the locality. Generally they were higher for jute land than for rice, and in the *talukdāri* area in the north than in the *khās* area in the central division, while the small middlemen rackrented their tenants and got double the rates. On an average the ryoti rents as settled worked out to Rs. 3-5-1 per acre on the entire holding; and for settled and occupancy raiyats only to Rs. 4-1-7 in the northern and Rs. 3-11-2 in the central division per acre cultivated. Ryots holding at fixed rates, and non-occupancy ryots paid less. In the Pātikārā estates in the centre of the district the incidence of rent per acre in the area under direct management is Rs. 2-4-1 per acre, and much higher in the *patni tāluks;* while for settled or occupancy ryots only the rents average Rs. 2-8-8 per acre.

In the report on the provincial rates operations for the year 1907-08 the gross rental of the district is given as Rs. 42,68,000, and the estimated normal cropped area 1,170,000. This gives a fraction over Rs. 3-10-0 per acre, but of course the gross rental includes other items besides the rent of arable and orchard lands. In Government estates the incidence of rent on each acre assessed works out to Rs. 2-4-0.

Increase of rent rates. There is not much material regarding the increase of rent rates since the Permanent Settlement, and it would be unprofitable to compare rates assessed on the actual area cultivated as ascertained in the annual measurement with the continuous rents paid nowadays. We learn from a letter written by the Collector in 1836 that there had been no substantial increase of rates in *pargana* Baldakhāl since the year 1787, and in 1835 it was reported of the *parganas* in the south-west that the rates for arable land (*nāl*) were from 8 annas to Rs. 4 a *kāni* or from 6¼ annas to Rs. 3-7-0 an acre. In the settlement of some villages of Gangāmandal in 1897 Mr. Cumming found the earliest rates recorded to be for the year 1789 Rs. 11 per *kāni* (query *kāni* =·4 acres) for *pān baraj*, Rs. 5 for homestead, Rs. 2-2-0 for agricultural

high land, Rs. 2 for marshy land, with higher rates for sugarcane and lands near the village. Later rates were lower, and under the farming system the rents had been collusively entered at one rupee a *kāni*. In all recent settlements rents have been raised, but it is practically impossible to distinguish the amount due to enhancement of rates from the additions for new cultivation.

Owing no doubt to the absence of means of transport prices in the 18th century fluctuated with terrible ease and the peasantry were liable to suffer almost as much from their fall as from their rise. In 1785, only a year after disastrous floods, rice was selling at three maunds a rupee; in 1787, the price was 23 seers a rupee. In 1835 after a splendid harvest the price in villages away from the river was three to four annas a maund, "lower than it is ever remembered to have been."* In 1850 common rice was eight annas a maund, but it rose to Rs.5 a maund during the Orissa famine of 1866. In 1870 the price had fallen again to Re.1-8-0 a maund. From 1877 to 1886, the price of rice averaged 21 seers or more per rupee † and in the next ten years about 14¾ seers per rupee. For the ten years ending in 1902, prices at Comilla ranged from 8½ seers per rupee in 1897 to over 18 seers in 1899; the district average for the five years ending in 1900 being 13 seers 10 chataks and for the next five 13 seers 7 chataks. In 1904 coolie rice for Assam was bought for export at Rs. 2-2-0 a maund. In 1906, prices rose throughout the province and only 8¼ seers of common rice were to be had for a rupee at Comilla; in the next two years this high level was maintained, but with the good harvests of 1908 and 1909, there was a fall, and in January 1910, eleven seers of common rice were to be had for the rupee at Comilla and twelve to thirteen at Brāhmanbāria. In February coarse red rice was sold in markets in the interior at 6 annas for five seers, and was to be bought for export at Rs. 2-12-0 a maund. The best rice is about twice as dear as the commonest. Prices at Comilla and Chāndpur are nearly equal, but in Brāhmanbāria they range rather lower, though the reverse was the case in 1907-08. Salt has became cheaper of late owing to the remission of the duty. In 1766, the East India Company limited the price to two rupees a maund, but it rose afterwards to five rupees, and *panga* salt sold at from 8 to 10 seers a rupee between 1893 and 1903. With the reduction of the duty the price dropped to between 13 and 15 seers a rupee in 1906 and it now sells at 20 seers in Comilla and Chāndpur and at 16 seers in Brāhmanbāria. Fish of the best kinds sells at from 2½ annas a seer at Sarāil to 6½ annas in Comilla, more or less according to the season; coarse fish is cheaper. Milk is to be bought at from 4 to 8 pice a seer, say 1¼ to 2½*d*. a quart, in country markets, where it is brought in big brass bowls (*kalsi*).

* Collector's letter of the 18th May 1836.

† Para. 172, Chakla Roshnābād Settlement Report.

A common labourer gets 6 annas a day. A man who can use tools or put up a hut gets 8 annas, and a carpenter or mason 12 to 13 annas, or a good deal more if possessed of any degree of skill. In Brāhmanbāria a boatman gets 12 annas a day or Rs. 15 a month for himself and a dugout; a larger boat with two men can be had for from Rs. 20 to Rs. 30 a month, and extra boatmen at 6 to 8 annas a day. An agricultural labourer is given 3 to 5 annas and two meals daily. Wages.

In 1866, Mr. J. F. Browne stated that the wages of a common coolie were five rupees a month and his work dear at two.

In 1871 a common labourer was paid $3\frac{1}{2}$ annas, without food, and a blacksmith and carpenter 8 annas; this was double the rates of 1850. In 1790 Lieutenant Parlby charged $2\frac{3}{4}$ and 3 *kuyas* a rupee for earthwork on the Gumti embankment, say a rupee per 1,000 cubic feet, and in 1858 the rate was Rs. 1-8-0 per 1,000 cubic feet, whereas the District Board now pays Rs. 3-8-0 to Rs. 5 per 1,000 cubic feet.

In 1888 the Subdivisional Officer of Chāndpur reported that an agricultural labourer would get Rs. 30 a year besides his board and lodging, while for harvesting in August and September the pay was Rs. 4-8-0 a month besides food, and in November and December Rs. 7-8-0 a month. He estimated the average earnings of a labourer for eight months' work at Rs. 24 and his food. There has been a considerable rise in wages, but it is less than that in the price of food.

In Chakla Roshnābād the average size of a field, *i.e.*, the area within a single boundary comprising one class of land and in the possession of one person, was ·39 acres and the average size of an occupancy ryot's holding was $3\frac{1}{2}$ acres; both holdings and fields growing smaller towards the north. In Sarāil the average size of a field was ·59 acres and that of a holding 2·84 acres; in the Pātikārā estate the holdings in different circles varied from 2·63 to 7·94 acres, the average being 3·88 acres with 10 plots to the holding. It must, however, be remembered that one tenant may own more than one holding. The Settlement Officer of Sarāil calculated that each ryot cultivated 3·68 acres. There were found in 1901 about 1,216,000 persons of the class of rent-paying cultivators. This would mean a little more than 200,000 householders. The cultivated area was put down in 1901 at 1,071,000 acres, which would give 5 acres to the household. Size of holdings.

Mr. Cumming in 1899 A.D. found the price of occupancy rights to be about Rs. 75 per acre in Sarāil, between Rs. 60 and Rs. 78 near Kasbā, and between Rs. 73 and Rs. 81 in Nabinagar. Value of land.

In Gangāmandal the average price as shown in registered deeds was Rs. 102 per acre; while in the south of the district (Lāksām and Chauddagrām) the price was Rs. 43 to Rs. 46.

In the survey of the Pātikārā estates in 1905 the prices were found to range from Rs. 37 to Rs. 116 in different circles but the figures are based on but few transactions. Mr. Cumming found that a landlord might expect 18 to 20 years' purchase of the annual value of a tenure, *i.e.*, the rent he receives less the rent he pays and the collection expenses. In all 271 Government estates in the district with an area of 106,721 acres and subject to a revenue of Rs. 2,16,985 have been sold at different times for Rs. 17,14,105. Many factors must influence prices, and general averages tell little except that the assessment leaves a valuable margin of profit.

The deeds of sale of occupancy rights registered in the year 1909 show 2,771 *kānis* sold for Rs. 1,93,896 or an average of Rs. 69 per *kāni*, which is equivalent to Rs. 200 an acre approximately. The highest level was reached in the Chāndpur *thānā* where the average price was Rs. 103 per *kāni*, and the lowest in Hājiganj Rs. 33 per *kāni*.

Sales were most numerous in the Brāhmanbāria subdivision where average prices varied from Rs. 67 to Rs. 84 in different circles. Land near towns is more valuable, building sites in Comilla fetching as much as Rs. 3,000, £200, an acre.

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Loans are taken on simple pawn* (*bandhak*), on pledge of movable property with the condition that it shall be forfeited if the debt is not repaid by a certain date (*kāt bandhak*), on mortgage (*rehan*), or on usufructuary mortgage (*daisudhi rehan*). Interest is paid at half an anna or an anna per rupee per mensem on petty loans, or even at two annas per rupee, and at two to two and a half per cent. per mensem on larger sums lent to persons in a better position, while on a mortgage of houses or other substantial security the rate may be as low as 12 per cent. per annum. In 1903 the Collector found the interest extorted by the money-lenders of Nabinagar to be 150 per cent. Mr. Cumming in the east of the district found the professional money-lender not much in evidence, most of the loans being given by well-to-do peasants to their more needy neighbours; and he estimated that from a fifth to a fourth of the people were in debt. In the report on the Chittagong division for the quinquennium ending in 1904-5, the Commissioner wrote: "The people are generally lavish in their expenditure on social ceremonies and frequently incur debts on this account. Money is borrowed at rates of interest varying from 24 to 75 per cent.; and it frequently happens, as a result of the debtor's inability to pay, that his holding passes into the hands of his creditors. The result is the gradual creation of a class of well-to-do middlemen. It does not, however, appear that cultivators have to borrow for the necessaries of life. There have been no signs of a decrease in the indebtedness of the agricultural community, rather it would appear that

* Settlement Report of Chakla Roshnābād, paragraph 38.

as prices rise generally and the standard of comfort also becomes higher, expenses on special occasions tend to increase, while there is yet no counteracting extension of the habit of thrift at ordinary times. Even the condition of the jute cultivators is not as satisfactory as might naturally be expected: their thriftless habits impel them to squander freely the ready money derived from the sale of their crops. They lay nothing by to safeguard themselves against subsequent losses, and, as a result, are seriously impoverished in a bad season. The rentals and value of the agricultural holding are increasing and this fact encourages reckless borrowing. Those who lose their property from indebtedness generally migrate to Hill Tippera where they can obtain settlement of jungle lands on easy terms. The indebtedness of the people is also due to their love for litigation which proves ruinous to many." So also the boom in the weaving trade that followed on the cult of Indian made goods since the year 1905 is said to have left the weavers deeply indebted to the middlemen who advanced them money. Mortgages of land, of occupancy as well as of superior rights, are common in most parts, but in the Pātıkārā estates the Settlement Officer found it the custom to sell portions of holdings rather than to mortgage the whole.

Khay bandhak, or *khay poshāni* (wasting mortgage, similar in effect to a *zar-i-peshgi* lease) is found in Laksām and other parts of the district. This is a mortgage by which the land is devised for a term, usually nine years or less, in lieu of both principal and interest. The high rates at which the land is valued are remarkable—Rs. 10 or more per *kāni*, say Rs 30 to Rs. 50 an acre, for each year's use in an area where the ordinary rents of occupancy ryots do not exceed one or two rupees a *kāni*.

Loans are rarely taken from Government. There is no recorded case of an advance being given under the Land Improvement Loans Act, and the amounts advanced under the agriculturists Loans Act were trifling up to the year 1905-07, when there was scarcity and Rs. 1,65,000 were lent. There is in Comilla a loan society with a capital of one lakh founded in 1871; and another society "The Chāndpur Co-operative Town Bank, Limited," with a share capital of Rs. 1,300 on the Schultz-Delitzsch system has been founded lately under the auspices of Government; a similar society has been registered lately in Comilla.

It cannot be said that the idea of co-operative credit has taken a strong hold on the people, but the zeal of the zamīndārs of Homnābād and of the manager of the Bhukailāsh estates has created twelve embryo societies which, though not very robust at present, may lead to greater things.*

A long series of officers have reported that the people of Tippera are well off in comparison with those of most parts of India, and there seems no doubt that their condition has improved in recent years. In 1888 the Collector after a special enquiry Material condition.

* Since this was written some more societies have been formed and the prospects of success are brighter.

stated as his belief that at least 10 per cent. of the population suffered from chronic insufficiency of food, which he explained to mean anything less than the usual three full meals a day, the first eaten cold, and the other two hot. Since then there has not been much change in the food of the people, but in other respects the standard of comfort is rising. The clothing is better, and coats and shirts of English make are more common. Gold ornaments have been substituted for silver in the houses of the upper classes, and silver for those of bell-metal or brass. Men ride now or go in carts or trains whose fathers would have walked, and there is an increasing demand for crockery, cigars, cigarettes and perfumery.

The deposits in the post office savings banks have risen in ten years from a little over two to nearly nine and a half lakhs.

CHAPTER VI.

AGRICULTURE.

Irrigation.

The greater part of the district consists of an alluvial soil watered by numerous rivers and streams. The Lālmai Hills and the uplands on the east adjoining Hill Tippera alone rise above the general level, and during the rainy season two-thirds of the district are submerged, while in the Brāhmanbāria subdivision there are large areas permanently marshy or covered with water. In most years the rainfall is abundant and irrigation is unnecessary even on lands too high to benefit by the annual overflow of the rivers. When required water is raised by a basket (*seunt*) swung from ropes held by two men standing on either side of the hollow or channel from which the water is to be drawn, or by means of the *jant* or *kundā*, a long scoop shaped like a canoe which moves upon a fulcrum near its centre. The longer end of the scoop is dipped into the water, and when full is raised by a lever, consisting of a bamboo furnished with a heavy counterpoise and discharges its contents into a channel at the higher level. Water may in this way be lifted to a considerable height by successive stages.

Soil.

Excepting in the Lālmai Hills, where the earth consists chiefly of decomposed rock of a reddish colour, the soil throughout the district is of alluvial origin and composed of clay and sand in varying proportions. The cultivators recognise a large number of varieties according to the relative proportion of the ingredients and the colour and consistency of the product. A list of names in common use in Chakla Roshnābād will be found in paragraph 3 of Mr. Cumming's report of 1899 on the settlement of the estate. The soil in most parts is exceedingly fertile, especially the rich loam known as Mātiāl Māti, which contains about three parts of clay to one of sand.

Manures.

The inundated lands require but little manure to grow rice. Generally all they get is the ashes of the stubble which is burned before the field is ploughed again. Jute requires more food and the cultivator gives it as much cattle manure as he can spare, but as there is a great demand among the poorer classes for cow-dung, which after being dried and made into flat cakes is used as fuel, comparatively little of it finds its way to the field. Garden crops such as chillies, and the betel-nut, may be given sweepings or leaf mould, or mud from *khāls*, and betel-vines are given oil cake.

Cattle.

The local cattle are small in size and poor in quality, a result due to insufficient food and the absence of any organised means or method of improving the breed. The deterioration thus caused is aggravated by the steady tendency to bring waste lands under

cultivation, thereby reducing the area available for pasturage. The chief grazing grounds left are the marshy lands or *bīls*, the sites of deserted villages, and the sides of swamps, tanks, and roads; the latter are the chief resource of cattle during the rains, and there can be little doubt that there is a scarcity of fodder in many villages at this time of the year, when the rice and jute crops are on the ground*. The cattle are then partly stall-fed, but it is the exception for them to get anything but straw for fodder; and their sheds are of a wretched, flimsy, description with scarcely a mat wall to keep out wind and rain. Both bullocks and buffaloes are used for the plough, and the Muhammadans employ cows for the same purpose. Plough bullocks are imported from Dacca, Rangpur, Mymensingh, and Manipur; the best breed being the sturdy dark-coloured cattle brought from Manipur. Ponies are not common, but are bred to a small extent in the Dāūdkāndi, Murādnagar, Nabinagar and Brāhmanbāria *thānās*.

Cultivators often plough in turn for one another, and a man can generally hire a plough, or may even get his field entirely prepared for a lump sum down, about Rs. 2 per bigha.

Malignant sore throat, *galaphula*, is the commonest of the more serious diseases and outbreaks of it occur in the cold weather and spring. There are in most years sporadic cases of foot-and-mouth disease (*bātun*) and occasional epidemics of rinderpest (*jhāran*). Anthrax sometimes visits the district and it is considered unsafe to give grass cut near Comilla to valuable horses. There is a veterinary dispensary at Comilla in charge of a qualified practitioner.

f In the returns for 1907-08 the normal cultivated area is shown
on. as only 1,486,000 acres of which 316,000 acres were occupied by second crops, giving the net cropped area as 1,170,000 acres or 73 per cent. of the district area.

It must be remembered that in the absence of a village recording agency these figures can be regarded only as estimates, and there are no means of checking them except in the few areas which have been surveyed cadastrally. The survey of Chakla Roshnābād, 1892 and onwards, showed that in the northern and central divisions of that estate about 72 per cent. was under cultivation, and another 8 per cent. cultivable; and in the Sarāil estates, surveyed about the same time, 73 per cent. was found to be cultivated. The survey of the Pātikārā estates in the south-west of the district showed 80 per cent. of the total area to be cultivated and another 6 per cent. capable of being reclaimed in 1905. These proportions are near enough the estimate for the whole district to point to its approximation to correctness.

n of Mr. Browne, in his report on the district (1866) at the close
on, of the Revenue Survey, gave the area of Tippera as 2,648 square miles, of which 1,995 square miles, or over 75 per cent. were under

* In some parts of the district it is customary to sell off cattle after the ploughing season or kill them for food.

cultivation. In 1871 the Collector was of opinion that only a very small proportion of cultivable land was lying uncultivated, and in 1874-75 the cultivated area was estimated at 1,301,760 acres or 76 per cent. of the area of the district as it then stood. In 1891-92 the total area under crops was shown as 1,117,000 acres, in 1901-02 as 1,360,000 acres, and in 1907-08 as 1,427,000 acres. The twice cropped area was in 1901-02 about 289,000, and in 1907-08 nearly 294,000 acres; giving the net cropped areas in those two years as 1,071,000 and 1,133,000 acres, equivalent to 67 and 71 per cent. respectively of the total area of the district. From these figures it might be inferred that there has been an actual decrease in cultivation. This is certainly not the case, and it seems probable that the early estimates were too high. In the settlement of Chakla Roshnābād in the east and of Sarāil in the north of the district the tenants were found to be in possession of a good deal of land in excess of that to which they were entitled, and there was clear evidence of new cultivation. In 1874 when the Lālmai and Maināmati Hills were sold to the Rājā of Hill Tippera they were covered with jungle; now all but the highest points have been reclaimed and cultivated. Moreover, it is well known that cultivation is encroaching on the borders of the marshes, and the contraction of the pasture grounds owing to this cause frequently leads to disturbances of the peace. The returns for the year 1907-08 showed 72,000 acres of current fallow and 123,000 of cultivable waste, but practically all the land fit for cultivation in its present state has been taken up, and there is not very much room for further increase.

Distribution of cropped area.

Rice is by far the most important crop in the district, and in spite of the popularity of jute the proportion of the land given up to it is increasing. In 1901 the normal area under rice was 843,000 acres or 63 per cent. of the gross cropped area; in 1907-08 it was 1,013,000 acres, or nearly 69 per cent. Other food-grains, mostly pulses, occupy less than one-fifteenth of the cropped area.

Next to rice in order of importance comes jute, which occupies normally about 21 per cent. of the gross cropped area, being more extensively grown in the Chāndpur and Brāhmanbāria subdivisions and to less than half that extent in the *sadr* subdivision. Oilseeds rank next and are grown on about 3 per cent. of the cropped area. The cultivation of sugarcane is being abandoned gradually, and in 1907-08 sugarcane was planted in only 4,300 acres, or little more than a quarter of the normal area sown in 1901. Orchards and garden produce make up over 4 per cent. of the crops. Tobacco though occupying but a small area is a valuable crop, and the betel-vines and areca-nut palms must bring in a lot of money, while of vegetables chillies and radishes are grown extensively.

Rice.

Rice (*Oriza sativa*), *dhān* in the vernacular, is the staple crop. Here, as elsewhere, it falls into three main divisions, according to

the season at which it is reaped, *viz.*, the *āus* or autumn crop, the *āman* or winter crop, and the *boro* or spring crop. There are numerous varieties in each class, and Mr. Cumming collected no less than 172 specimens of different kinds. "The kinds called Gobindabhog and Jafrail are," he says, "aristocrats among rice seeds: delicate, almost round grains, pure in colour, and grown in a rather short plant, which thrives on high fertile soil. The coarse varieties come from long-stemmed plants in low-lying lands. Heavy clayey soil, which retains moisture is most suitable for ordinary kinds of paddy." Some kinds of rice will grow in marshy lands covered by 15 feet of water, others thrive on the high ridges and uplands on the east; but the rice from the high lands is far the finer, though the low lands of Brāhmanbāri give the heaviest outturn.

The *āus* (Sans. *āsu* or early) crop is sown from the middle of March to the middle of May, on lands that are not likely to be submerged in the flood season and is harvested from the middle of July to the middle of September. Some intermediate varieties harvested in October are classed in the returns as *āus*. The seed is generally sown broadcast, but Mr. Cumming notes that much of the *āus* rice in the Roshnābād estate is transplanted. When the seed is sown broadcast the land has to be ploughed again and harrowed when the young plants are about a foot high. This resembles the operation known as *byushan* in Orissa where it applies to all rice sown broadcast. If the land is under water at the time of sowing the seed is steeped in water before it is sown. If sown in seed-beds the seedlings are transplanted when a month old. The principal varieties of *āus* are *Chuchya sāil*, *Kāminī sāil*, *Kāchalāni sālāi*, *Boilām*, *Bhāturi*, *Lemā*, *Parang*, *Ghrita-kanchan*, *Phulbādām*, *Lohāiguri*, *Kālisāthyā*, *Dhalisathyā*, *Ekrā*. The last three are very coarse rices, which under favourable circumstances ripen in sixty days from the time of sowing, and hence the name *Sāthya*. About a maund or a little more of seed is required for an acre of *āus*. The estimates of the normal produce vary from 15 to 30 maunds of paddy, but it is generally agreed that it is less than the yield of *āman* rice, and the grain is inferior and eaten only by the poorer classes. Of recent years the area under this crop has been about 250,000 acres.

Boro rice is sown in seed-beds and transplanted in December or Januar y into the soft clayey soil on the banks of rivers, on the margin of *bils*, or in newly formed islands. The crop is gathered in April. It yields a coarse grain, only used by the poorest class and as food for cattle. It is planted in about 24,000 acres.

The *āman* or cold weather rice, known in the centre of the district as *paush* from the month of harvesting, is reaped in November and December. The short-stemmed varieties, *shāil* or *roā dhān*, which yield the finest rice, are sown in seed-beds in June or July, and from July to September, when about 9 inches to a foot

high, the seedlings are planted out in little clumps of four or five, about 9 inches apart, in soil that has been ploughed to the consistency of gruel. In 1909 when the crop in parts of the district was drowned by the floods rice sown in September gave a fair outturn thanks to unusual rain in November. A seed-bed should provide plants for about ten times its own area. The coarser varieties (*Barshāl* or *bājāl*) are grown in deep water, and are for the most part sown broadcast in *bīls* or low-lying lands from the middle of March to the middle of May. They are seldom transplanted. As the water rises over the inundated fields the *āman* crop grows with marvellous rapidity, a growth of as much as 9 inches having been recorded in 24 hours.

No improvement seems to have been effected of late years in the quality of the rice grown in the district, but a great extension of the area under cultivation has certainly taken place. In the year 1901 there were 251,000 acres under *āus* and 562,000 under *āman* rice; in 1907-08 these areas had risen to 257,000 and 674,000 acres respectively; and in the following year with high prices and a better season rose to 320,000 and 701,000 acres, while *boro* rice was grown on another 13,000 acres. Rice is the principal crop in every part of the district but covers a larger portion of the *sadr* than of the other two subdivisions, the difference being greatest in the case of the *āus* crop which occupies 29 per cent. of the cultivated area in the *sadr*, nearly 22 per cent. in Brāhmanbāria, and only 13 per cent. in the Chāndpur subdivision. The estimated production of rice during the five years ending in 1907-08 was 2,005,000 tons, or just over 400,000 tons a year. In several years the harvest was poor, but the full crop assumed, 8 maunds of rice per acre for the *āus* harvest and under 13 maunds for the winter harvest, seems low in comparison with the results of the experiments of Mr. Cumming * in Chakla Roshnābād, which gave 19 to 21 maunds of paddy per acre for medium class lands, and those of the Settlement Officer in Sarāil which gave from 20 to 30 maunds for *āus* and from 15 *to* 30 maunds for long-stemmed winter rice.

Other cereals and pulses.

The other cereals and pulses grown in the district occupy a normal area of only 24,000 acres.† They include the millets known as *kaon* and *china* which are sown in January and February, and reaped in April and May, and various pulses, such as gram, *khesāri* (*Lathyrus sativus*), peas, *masuri* (*Ervum lens*), *mūng* (*Phaseolus mungo*), *arhar* (*Cajanus indicus*) and *kalāi* (*Phaseolus roxburghii*). These crops are for the most part sown towards the end of the rains and reaped during the cold season. They are cultivated on the same kind of land as rice, with the exception of *arhar* which is sown on high dry land.

* Para. 74, Settlement Report.

† The agricultural returns give the normal area as 27,200 acres, but it has not been above 25,000 since 1901.

Jute, *pāt* or *nāliya*, is the most important crop after rice. It is very sensitive to changes in the Calcutta market, and there is a constant swinging of the pendulum, a year of high prices being followed by increased cultivation of jute and *vice versā*. In 1901 the normal area under jute was taken at 285,000 acres, but after the high prices of 1904 it rose to nearly 347,000 acres. This however was not kept up, and the high price of rice led to a return to that crop, only 234,000 acres being under jute in 1908. It is most largely grown in the Brāhmanbāria and Chāndpur subdivisions, where it occupies from a fourth to a fifth of the area under cultivation. The jute grown in Tippera belongs to two main classes, Kachāri grown on the east boundary towards the hills, and Nurnagar which is raised in the plains; there is also a third variety called Sarāil which is grown on the north bank of the Titās in the Sarāil estate. The Nurnagar is lighter in colour than Sarāil; the later gives the largest outturn; and the Kachāri is the best in quality.

The most suitable soil for jute is a sandy loam and it prefers lands which are inundated but not for over long. It is sown in the months of March, April and May after as many as 7 or 8 ploughings and as much manuring as the cultivator can afford. A ploughing and a harrowing are required after the sowing, and as soon as the plants appear above ground much weeding has to be done. The plant should be ready for cutting after being 4½ to 5½ months in the ground, *i.e.*, in July, August, or September. The cut stalks are steeped for about 10 or 15 or even 20 days under a layer of grass, earth and brushwood, and when sufficiently rotten the fibre is easily stripped off by hand. It is then washed, preferably in running water, and hung up in bundles to dry. It takes 30 men to separate in a day the fibre from an acre of land, but women and even children can do this quite expertly. The full outturn for the district is estimated by the Agricultural Department at 14½ maunds of fibre to the acre, but in only one year in the last eight has that level been reached, and 13 maunds seems to be a fair average. Mr. Cumming put the outturn at 20 maunds per acre. The refuse is not wasted, but dried and used for fuel or fencing. False hemp (*san-pāt*) sown in October and cut in April is used for making nets, and occupies some 22,000 acres. Cotton, once an important product, is no longer to be seen.

After rice, fibres, and betel-nut, the most valuable crops are the oilseeds, but the cultivation of these seems to be decreasing, and the area given up to them has not been more than 45,000 acres in any year since 1901, though the normal was in 1907-08 given as 56,000 acres. Rape and mustard (*Sarishā* and *Rāi*) are grown on more than half this area. They follow jute or rice, and are sown about the end of October on high land. They prefer a loamy soil, sandy but rich; it must be well pulverised, and if it be not inundated a considerable quantity of manure has to be given. They are harvested in January or February.

Til or gingelly comes next in order of importance. There are two crops in the district—one, the Tippera *til*, which is usually of a light colour, and the other, country *til*, which is usually dark in colour. Both crops are raised on sandy loams or *chharbāri* land. Country *til* is sown in April and harvested in June and July. The hill *til* is sown in September or October and cut in January. Linseed is grown on about 4,000 acres, after rice or jute. The castor-oil bean, *bharenda*, is also found, and an oil used for burning is obtained from the fruit of the *petrāj*.

Betel-nut or *supāri* (Areca catechu) is grown throughout the *Sadr* and Chāndpur subdivisions, and in the extreme south-west of the district is the most important crop after rice; so important that the revenue of Durlai and other *parganas* was calculated at the permanent settlement on an estimate of the produce of these trees. The *supāri* is grown from seed sown in nurseries in November or December. When the seedlings are about 20 months old they are planted out in land manured with sweepings and leaf mould in the shade of *māndār* or plantain trees. In its seventh or eighth year the tree yields fruit and may go on bearing for 25 years. In 1896 Mr. Nitya Gopal Mukerjee of the Agricultural Department, estimated the produce at from 5 to 9 maunds an acre worth at the present rates from Rs. 50 to Rs. 100. It is an exceedingly profitable crop, but the trees are delicate and easily damaged by high winds. Betel-nut.

The betel-vine (*pān*) is grown throughout the centre and south of the district. It requires thorough drainage, rich soil, and shade. For the reception of the young vines a bed (*bhīti*) is prepared and enclosed in a frame of reeds about 7 feet high, covered over with grass or straw thick enough to protect the plants from the sun without excluding all light and air. The soil must be sandy, though strong, and requires careful preparation. In Tippera the beds are not raised as high as in many other localities, and in Bibir Bāzār near Comilla there are acres of these betel houses (*pān baraj*) hardly above the general level. The seedlings are planted out about the month of October, and when they begin to sprout the vines are trained up sticks. New earth is added from time to time, and the plant if looked after lasts for several years, bearing continuously. There is no certainty as to the outturn, but it is a very profitable, though exhausting, crop. The leaves fetch from one to three annas a *birā*, containing from 96 to 112 leaves. Betel-vines.

Sugar-cane, once a valuable crop, is gradually disappearing. Ten years ago there were about 16,000 acres in which it was grown, but that area has been dwindling steadily until now it is little more than 4,000 acres. About half the cane produced in the district is eaten raw. There are five known varieties, *viz.*, *Shāmghara*, *Khagra*, *Nāgra*, *Kāli*, and *Lāl Bombai*, or the red Bombay variety, which is the best of all. It is common for Sugar-cane.

sugar-cane to follow mustard in the same field. The soil is ploughed twice or thrice and is then manured, after which it has to be ploughed another six or eight times. Much trouble is taken over the cuttings. A portion is cut from the old plant and placed in the mud on the edge of a tank. After 15 days or a month these cuttings are taken up, and divided into portions containing three joints each, which are placed in a prepared plot on the bank of a tank, which has been richly manured with a mixture of tank mud, paddy-chaff, and cow-dung. After the eyes and roots have come out, they are taken up in bundles and transplanted in lines 18 inches apart. The transplanted plant remains about 10 or 11 months in the ground from April to March.

Tobacco is another crop that is less popular than formerly. It used to occupy over 4,000 acres, but now is grown on little more than half that area. It needs a very strong and fertile soil, rich with new silt or heavily manured and careful cultivation. The seeds are sown in a nursery in September or October, and after 25 or 30 days the seedlings are planted out. They have to be protected from the sun for five or six days. As they grow up, old and spoiled leaves must be removed, and in three months the plant is ready and is cut off near the ground.* In the centre of the district, where it grows freely on the banks of the Gumti, there is a wider margin of season, some plants running to flower in February, others being only planted out then. There are several varieties. The country (*deshi*) has a rather long narrow leaf, the *ingli* has a thicker, smaller, rounded leaf. The leaves are cured for home consumption by being dried first in the house and finally in the sun. It is common to mix *rab* with the dried leaves. Another mixture, called *masālyādār tāmāku*, or scented tobacco, which is used by the higher classes, is kept two or three months before use. About one and a half or two months after the first cutting, another cutting can be made, but this yields a smaller outturn. Four to five maunds per acre of dried tobacco are obtained from two cuttings.

Chillies, *marich*, are cultivated extensively in garden land. The local consumption is large and a great deal is exported to Calcutta. The seeds are sown in a nursery after the rains, and when a month old planted out in land which must be pulverised and manured. The plants are ready in June or July, when they are taken up and dried.

The vegetables of the district include beans of various sorts, the *baigun* or brinjal, potatoes, pumpkins, gourds, cucumbers, sweet potatoes, onions, garlic, tomatoes, radishes and turnips. Radishes (*mula*) of a large size are abundant in the cold weather, and in the rains prickly cucumber, *karela*, and a small gherkin, *karkarel*, are grown extensively. The country bean (*chuin* or Canavalia ensiformis) is a climbing plant that grows over the cottage roofs,

* Chakla Roshnābād Report, para. 81.

covering them in spring with masses of white and blue flowers, or is trained over bamboo platforms about 3 feet from the ground. It is noticeable that the brinjals are long and sausage-shaped, not egg-shaped or round as near Calcutta. Tomatoes have been added to the list recently, and are brought to market both ripe and unripe. Among the fruits may be mentioned melons, papayas, several kinds of plantains, which are usually poor in quality, the *pumelo*, mangoes of an inferior quality but consumed largely in curries while unripe or pickled in mustard oil, limes, jack-fruit, lichis, custard-apple, Indian olive (*jalpai*) used in curries, Indian plums (*ber*), guava, *bel*, palmyra, dates and cocoanut; of these the last, which is much grown in the south-west of the district, and the jack which lines roads, tanks, and homesteads, are the most valuable.

Miscellaneous crops.

Coriander (*dhanya* or *dāud*) is to be found near every village, grown in small patches of high land during the cold weather and plucked in March. With it various *sāgs* are often sown. Safflower and other dyes also are grown in minute quantities. *Khesari* or *teurira* (Lathyrus sativus) is sown to a considerable extent in the centre of the district, sometimes after jute or rice, occasionally also as a third crop, and serves largely as food for cattle.

Rotation.

The cultivators, it is said, do not believe in rotation, but think that if the crop be changed the productive capacity of the field will be diminished. But the extension of jute cultivation and the tendency to sow either rice or jute as may promise the larger profit have produced a great change; much land grows rice in one year and jute in another; indeed, it is said to be understood that jute cannot be grown continuously on the same plot of land, unless it is refreshed annually by inundation. The cold weather crops, mustard, pulses, tobacco, etc., may be varied from year to year, but it does not appear that the changes are rung with any thought of the benefits of rotation. Unconsciously, perhaps, the villagers often line their gardens with leguminous trees, *māndār* and others, which probably help to recoup the drain on the soil.

Agricultural appliances.

These are of the most primitive description, and no new varieties have been introduced. The plough is made entirely of wood, though sometimes the share is tipped with iron, and is light enough to be carried easily on the shoulder. The beam is about 6 feet long and curved, and the yoke $3\frac{3}{4}$ feet long is pierced by two or four yoke sticks. In the north the handle and the share are in one piece, but in the south are of separate pieces. The harrow (*moichang* or *chāyam*) is of two bamboos joined together by bars ladderwise, but narrowing towards the ends. A large rake (*achra*) with long bamboo teeth serves the purpose of a horse hoe or scarifier. A *kodāli*, a crowbar (*khanta*), a hatchet (*kurāl*), and a field knife or bill-hook (*dāo*), complete the equipment of a cultivator.

Rainfall and harvest.

There is not much information as to the relation between harvest and rainfall.

In Sarāil there is a proverb that runs:—

"If it rain in Āghan (November-December) the king goes a-begging; if it rain in Pous (December-January) husks become cowries; if it rain at the end of Māgh (January) praised the rājā blessed his land; if it rain in Phālgun (February-March) millets yield double."

Rain in November and December spoils the rice standing ripe for the sickle, while in early spring it enables the land to be ploughed and prepared in good time. But jute, autumn rice, winter rice, and the oilseeds and other crops of the cold weather all have rival claims, and it would need an expert to decide between them.

ion.

Scare-crows of various forms are used to keep off birds and jackals, such as a man of straw, a cow's head, a kerosine tin swinging in the wind with some matting to simulate a man's form, or a plain flag.

For watching his crops the husbandman occupies a *tang*, or covered staging on bamboo supports 12 to 18 feet high, and the high prices of recent years have made it profitable to pay a lad (*bandrākhāl*) to look after cattle and prevent their straying into the fields.

Fields of winter crops near the hills are often fenced with split bamboos to keep off deer, jackals, and other animals.

In some parts, as in the villages of Paitkārā and Gangāmandal, east of the Lālmai Hills, the fields are all raised and protected by well made walls of earth, leaving deep ditches between field and field, as in the mulberry lands of Central Bengal.

CHAPTER VII.

OCCUPATIONS, MANUFACTURES AND TRADES.

Occupations.

The table of occupations compiled from the census returns must be accepted with some reserve, as we have to discount not only, the inevitable mistakes but also a natural tendency to put down the more respectable of two occupations, for instance, the substitution of agriculture for fishing as a profession. The table shows that one-third of the people are actual workers, supporting the other two-thirds. Seventy-nine per cent. of the population depend on agriculture, that is, 3 per cent. more than in the census of 1891. Among these cl sses the actual workers number only 30 per cent. and include 8,000 rent-receivers, 486,000 rent-payers, of whom a twelfth have subsidiary occupations, and 6,000 labourers. The industrial classes account for 9 per cent. of the total population, and among these 37 per cent. are workers, including 18,000 fishermen and fish dealers, and 13,000 cotton-weavers. There are 41,000 labourers and the rest follow miscellaneous avocations, such as those of tailors, potters, goldsmiths, ironsmiths, carpenters, and leather-dressers. The professional classes make up only 2 per cent. of the population, and among them are 8,000 priests, 2,000 teachers, and as many medical men and musicians. The commercial classes number only one per cent. of the population, most of them being petty shopkeepers; and 1½ per cent. are employed in personal service as barbers, washermen, and the like. The parasitic classes include 10,000 mendicants of both sexes, with 8,000 dependants, and 500 prostitutes. Excluding these last classes only 24,000 women worked for their living; about half of these were landholders; 1,000 were domestic servants; 3,000 engaged in the preparation of animal and vegetable food; 2,000 were spinners or weavers, and nearly 1,000 potters. It is noticeable that neither Hindu nor Muhammadan women work in the fields.

Manufactures.

The local manufactures are not of great importance. With the exception of jute baling and oil pressing they consist of petty hand industries, such as weaving, pottery making, gold and silver, brass and iron work, and mat and basket making.

Jute baling.

Jute is pressed and baled by machinery at Chāndpur, Akhaura, and Chatālpār. The most important of these centres is Chāndpur, where there are seven European and two Indian firms engaged in the business and the shipments are said to exceed 20 lakhs of maunds annually. The Chittagong Company bale for export to Europe and the others for the Calcutta market.

Weaving.

Weaving gives employment to about 12,000 men and 1,000 women, chiefly of the Jugi caste, and the centres of the industry are at Mainamāti and Brāhmanbāria. The cloth woven at Mainamāti consists for the most part of bright-coloured cotton checks

suitable for the *iungis* or loin-cloths worn by Farāzi Muhammadans, but *jām sāris*, much worn by Muhammadan women, and mosquito nets of good quality, are manufactured also. The weavers understand twill-weaving and cross-warp weaving, and the weft in some cases is composed of 2, 4 or even 6 threads twisted together. New patterns have been introduced by the enterprise of Sarat Nāth, a large dealer of Comilla, and by the skill of one Mahesh Nāth, who learnt weaving at Serampur at the expense of the District Board.* Mr. Gupta saw no less than 28 varieties of checks at Comilla. The cloth is woven in pieces of 10 to 13 yards long and 22 inches wide, which sell for from Rs. 2-8-0 to Rs. 6 or Rs. 7 each. Dusters and purdahs with red and black stripes are manufactured in Comilla. In the north of the district in the Brāhmanbāria subdivision good cotton cloths suitable for *dhutis*, *chādars* and *sāris* are made. The weavers of Sarāil, Brāhmanbāria, and Kālikāchā, make also *dhutis* and *chādars* of a finer quality which sell for from Rs. 16 to Rs. 20 a pair. Over 600 women were shown in 1901 to earn their livelihood by spinning, but the weavers use chiefly imported yarn, and the efforts of the authorities have failed to popularise the fly shuttle.

d vork. More than 3,000 persons are engaged in the manufacture of gold and silver ornaments, but the most skilful workmen are immigrants from the Dacca district. The ornaments resemble in design those of Calcutta and Dacca, but the workmanship is inferior, though there has been some improvement of late.

I have seen well finished and artistic models made by a silversmith of Brāhmanbāria, but there seems to be little demand for work of this class.

ork. There are colonies of braziers belonging to the Kānsāri caste in many parts of the district. The centre of the industry is at Brāhmanbāria, where brass sheets (four parts copper and three parts zinc) are manufactured and exported to other parts. The braziers with their rough tools and primitive methods make household utensils, some of which are exported to neighbouring districts, but the industry is a small one, and much of the brass-work is imported. Finer brass-work is produced at Ramchandrapur, 5 miles north of *thānā* Morādnagar.

rk. There are over 1,200 workers in iron, but their tools are of the most primitive, and most of them make nothing but the simplest agricultural implements. In 1902, however, a workshop was established in Chāndpur which turns out cutlery and iron-work of finer quality.

Pottery gives employment to over 5,000 persons, and common cooking pots, water jars, and tobacco bowls are prepared in many parts of the district. Most of the pottery is rough, but in the

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* Mr. J. N. Gupta's Survey of the Industries and Resources of Eastern Bengal and Assam.

north-east there are beds of fine white clay which makes good earthenware.

Wood-work.

There are over 3,000 carpenters in the district, but they have little skill, and can, as a rule, make only agricultural implements and common furniture or fittings for houses.

Mat and basket making.

Fine mats are made from the *sital pati* (Phrynium dichotomum) which grows luxuriantly in the marshes, and stouter mats from a plant known as *mortāg* or *murta*. Baskets of many kinds are made at Comilla from cane, *mortāg*, or bamboo, but the workmanship is not up to the standard attained in the local jail.

Tanning.

A small tanning business is carried on by the local butchers and up-country Chamārs settled at Comilla and Brāhmanbāria. The Chamārs make shoes from imported leather for local use. They also make native musical instruments, such as *dhols*, *tablā*, etc., with country leather tanned in native fashion.

Sugar manufacture.

The manufacture of unrefined sugar and molasses (*gur*) is carried on to a small extent. The mill used is of the simplest kind, consisting of two long wooden rollers standing vertically, with a massive threading cut in each, by means of which they revolve in opposite directions; two uprights support a cross beam, in the middle of which the rollers revolve. The sugar-cane is cut into small pieces and crushed in the mill; the juice extracted is received in a receptacle, and then boiled and allowed to cool. Attempts have been made to introduce the Bihiā iron roller mills, but up to the present they have not supplanted the old-fashioned country mills.

Oil pressing.

Oil pressing is practised on a small scale, the mill used being of a primitive pattern, bullock driven; but an oil mill employing more modern methods has been at work in Chāndpur Old Bāzār since October 1903. Another started at Laksām has been closed owing to disputes over the management. Fish oil used to be prepared but the industry is nearly extinct.

Indigo.

Indigo was grown and manufactured at one time in the west of the district, but the factories were abandoned owing to the opposition of the ryots.

Trade.

No complete statistics of the trade of the district are to be had. Betel-nuts, jute, and rice are carried largely by water in country boats, but this traffic finds no place in the returns. From the riverside registering stations started in 1872, some figures were obtained, but even these were incomplete, showing only the traffic that passed by certain routes, and the system was abandoned from the year 1878. Moreover, the statistics of goods carried by railway are not reliable, as may be inferred from their showing exports of coal and tea in excess of the imports. Taking them for what they are worth, it appears that from a rice-exporting district Tippera has become one that imports rice in considerable quantities. In 1874-75 the export of rice was estimated at 4,000,000 maunds. During the five years ending in 1905 the net exports registered

came to little more than 3 lakhs of maunds a year, and in the next three years the balance changed and nearly 7,000,000 maunds were imported. In 1908-09, under a new system of registration, imports and exports were nearly equal. It is not possible to give even an estimate of the amount of rice carried by road and river, but it is safe to say that more is exported than imported in this way. The trade in jute has increased steadily, and the returns of 1908-09 show nearly 100,000 tons exported. The returns show also considerable export of molasses and tobacco down to the year 1907-08, but in 1909 show a balance on the other side, which is more probably correct. Other important exports which do not appear in the returns are cocoanuts, betel, and chillies. The Mainamāti muslins also are sent to other districts. The last few years have added *khui*, the inner skin of the sheath of the betel-nut, which is exported to Burma where it is used to make cheroot wrappers. Eggs also, pickled in lime and packed in large earthware pitchers, are sent by rail or river to Rangoon. The principal imports are salt, kerosine oil, ironware, brassware, cotton twist, and piece-goods carried by rail from Calcutta or Chittagong, and timber, bamboos, and thatching grass from Hill Tippera. A noticeable feature in the returns is the substitution of Indian made for European twist and piece-goods. The chief centres of trade are now Chāndpur, Hājiganj, Laksām, Comilla, and Akhaura on the railway; Chātālpār and Matlab on the Meghnā; Chitosi and Bāghmārā on the Dākātia; Gauripura, Jāfarganj, Companyganj and Pānch Pukuria on the Gumti; and Chāndura, Brāhmanbāria and Gokarna on the Titās. Ashuganj, Kutir Bāzār, Nabinagar and Elliotganj also are markets of some importance, and Phandauk is the chief trading centre of the extreme north.

The most important fair is that held in January at the village of Meher in *thānā* Hājiganj, which is also a bathing festival attended by large numbers of Hindus. There are two others, one held in November at Pānchpukuriā, the other, known as the Bhagwan Mela, at Brāhmanbāria in March.

s. The following account of the fisheries of the district is based upon the report of the Sadar Kanungo, who made a detailed enquiry into the subject during the rains of 1909 A.D. :—

After agriculture fishing is the most important industry in the district. The census returns show 18,000 persons or nearly 3 per cent. of the working population to be dependent for their livelihood mainly on fishing and subsidiary occupations, and though some of these have cultivation also, the figures do not include the large number of cultivators who fish occasionally in their own fields and ditches and consume what they catch. Kaibarttas are the most numerous and well-to-do of the fishing castes, and after them come the Malos or Jhalos, who number over 10,000 and the Tiyors (probably from the Sanskrit *dhibar* = fisherman) who number about 7,000. Many of the Namasudras also engage in fishing.

Very few Muhammadans make a trade of catching fish, but a good many, variously known as Mahefarosh, Moimāl, Mrida or Māchua—this last being an opprobrious epithet—buy fish from the Kaibarttas and retail them, often transporting the fish to considerable distances. Fish are most plentiful in the north of the district where they swarm in the extensive *bīls*, and rarest in the *Sadr* subdivision. Of the rivers the Meghnā and Titās afford the largest supply of fish, the catch of *hilsa* in the former river during the rains being particularly valuable.

Fishing implements.

Fish are caught in many ways. The report specifies no less than 35 varieties of nets used in different circumstances. Largest of all are the great drag-nets known as *jagat ber* (or world encloser) and *tānā ber*, which are 1,000 feet long and 30 feet deep or more, and are used in the Meghnā only. *Hilsa* are often caught at night with set nets supported by floats, like herring nets, with the lower edge sometimes weighted (*chāndi jāl*) and sometimes free (*chāpilā jāl*). There are also several kinds of seine nets, often stiffened with bamboo cross-bars, and sometimes with a pocket in the centre (*konā jāl*); and smaller pocket nets with various devices for closing the mouth when a fish enters. A common sight is the *dharma jāl*, known also as *khairā jāl or khorā jāl*, consisting of a net about 9 feet square fastened at the four corners to the ends of two split bamboos crossed in the middle, so as to keep it tight. The crossed bamboos are fastened at their point of intersection to one end of a long pole, and the net can thus be lowered into the water and raised again when a fish passes over it, a string fastened to the end of the pole giving the leverage necessary for lifting it quickly. Several forms of casting net, *jhānki jāl, konā jāl,* etc., are in use, and are thrown overhead when the fisherman is wading, but underhand or round arm when he is on dry land or in a boat. These nets are conical in shape and weighted at the rim, which may be 18 feet from the apex, and to cast them is very hard work and requires no little skill. A similar net, but larger, having a circumference sometimes of 180 feet, known as an *othar jāl*, is worked from a boat of the same name; it is carefully paid out while the boat is moving, and as soon as it sinks and the fisherman begins to draw in the rope by which it is secured in the centre, the mouth closes, the heavy weights on the rim scraping the bottom and driving the fish into the folds of the net, which is then hauled on board. The best nets are made from *san*-hemp (Corcorus capsulans) and tanned with the juice of the *gāb* (Dyospyros embryoptius), though sometimes left untanned as being less stiff and holding the fish better. There are several kinds of bamboo traps, and in shallow water a sort of inverted basket with a hole in the bottom (*polo*) is used extensively. In the *bīls* fish are speared from boats with the *konch, junti, or tenthā*. The former consists of 9 or 10 pieces of split bamboo, 6 or 7 feet long, sharpened, and often tipped with iron, at one end where they present a circle of

spear points, and bound tightly together above to form a handle. The *junti* is similar, but has barbed points. The *tenthā* is a thin bamboo pole about 12 feet long with a bundle of sharp iron hooks at one end; it is generally thrown. Barriers of bamboo or matting may be seen in all parts set across river courses or ditches to entrap small fish, or cut off their retreat when the tide ebbs. Everywhere men, women and children angle with bamboo rods, lines of cotton, and hooks locally made; or instead of hooks bits of bamboo sharpened at the ends and held in a bent position by the bait may be used. Grasshoppers are a common bait, and so are small fish (*cheng*, *okal*, or *lati*) and for *chital* a piece of jack-fruit is considered deadly.

The Kānungo found 77 varieties of fish. Of these the following are important :—

1. *Air* (Macrones aor).—Known in English as air fish, of which there are several varieties, *gochi*, *gagla*, *bheoah*; a very common fish and said to make the best *shutki*; so stupid that it is often caught by merely dragging a rope through the water, the fish flying before it into a confined space where they can be captured with baskets or small nets.

2. *Bāchā* (Entropichthys vacha).—Very free from bones and much esteemed for the table.

3. *Balia* (Gobious ginris).—Very common, said to eat good red earth, and to be fit to eat in the rains.

4. *Bata* (Labeo bata).—Swims in shoals near the surface of the water but very shy. Said to be delicious in the cold weather.

5. *Boāl* (Wallago attu).—A voracious fish subsisting chiefly on crustacea and small fry. It is coarse eating, but makes good dried fish. Very common.

6. *Chital* (Netopteros chitala).—A large but bony fish and indifferent eating. Common.

7. *Goghnā*.—It is related of this fish that its eggs are hatched in its mouth. The eggs are taken from the mouth and are sold separately in the market.

8. *Gojar* (Ophiocephalus mamlius) and *Shoal* (Ophiocephalus striatus).—Coarse fish and very plentiful. *Gojar* are not eaten by Hindus of good caste, either because of an idea that two kinds of fish of the same colour and shape (the one being *shoal*) should not be eaten, or because of the association of the circular marks on either side of its body with the *sudarsan chakra* or Vishnu's quoit.

9. *Hilsa* or Ilisha (Clupea ilisha).—Caught in quantities in the Meghnā during the rains. A very rich fish, and a great delicacy when in condition.

10. *Kālibāsh* (Labeo kalbasu) or *kālyā*.—A kind of carp common in Sarāil pargana, rather like *ruhit*, but smaller.

11. *Kātol* (Catla buchanani).—A very common fish and considered good to eat. It attains a length of over 4 feet.

12. *Koi* (Anabas scandens).—An almost amphibious creature that haunts the paddy-fields, where it lives on insects. Coarse and muddy in the cold weather, but said to be well flavoured just after the rains.

13. *Korāl* (Lates calcarifer).—A sea fish caught in the Meghnā.

14. *Mirgā* (Cirrhina mrigal).—A big fish that grows to 5 feet. Pleasant to the taste, but considered unwholesome for persons in delicate health.

15. *Mahā Shoal* or mahsir.—Caught in the Gumti, but not common.

16. *Pangash* (Pangasius buchanani).—Rather an oily fish and popular with the common people.

17. *Poah* (Sciena coitor).—A sea fish that comes up the Meghnā. Is said to be fond of music, and when in pursuit of it the fishermen always beat a drum in front of the net to allure the fish to the surface.

18. *Punti* (Barbus puntio).—A small fish, found everywhere in *bīls* and *jhīls*. It contains much oil and is prescribed as a strengthening diet.

19. *Ruhit* (Labeo ruhita).—Found in the larger rivers and tanks, where it attains a length of three feet. It is the most valuable of all the fish, and excellent to eat, especially about Christmas time.

Besides these quantities of prawn and crayfish (Ichcha) are found everywhere, and tortoises are caught in considerable numbers.

Most of the dried-called fish called *shutki* comes from Sylhet, the little that is prepared in the district being too savoury for any but the hill people. *Shutki* is made, without the use of salt, by drying the cleaned fish for four or five days on a bed of reeds and then packing them with straw in trenches covered over with earth where they remain till they take a reddish brown colour. Though excellent as bait for *koi*, it is very disagreeable to those who have not acquired a taste for it; indeed, it emits a most unpleasant odour perceptible at a considerable distance.

Fish is said to be nearly twice as dear as it was twenty years ago, and this is attributed in part to a diminution of the supply, but the evidence of such diminution is by no means convincing, and the depreciation of silver, together with the high scale of wages in the district, would suffice to account for the rise in price. Fish are not sold by weight but by the head, and the price varies from season to season and from market to market, fish being most plentiful in the cold weather, and scarcest from June to September. Roughly speaking, the average cost of the best sorts works out to 5 annas a seer at Chāndpur or Brāhmanbāria and to 6½ annas in Comilla, but in Sarāil it is only 2½ annas and 1½ in Phandāuk. Coarse fish are a good deal cheaper. Taking 3 annas a seer all Fish supply.

over, and putting the catch at 160,000 maunds a year, the annual value of the fisheries comes to 12 lakhs of rupees.

Fish-breeding is carried on in tanks and is said to be profitable, but the practice is not nearly general enough, and the ordinary methods are doubtless very wasteful, and tend to the destruction of spawn and fry.

For fishing the *jāliā* or *jele dinghi*, the *sharanga*, *kosh*, *othar*, and small dugouts are used.*

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* *Vide* post, page 69.

CHAPTER VIII.

NATURAL CALAMITIES.

Eighteenth century calamities.

The early correspondence in the Collector's office shows the district suffering from a succession of unfavourable seasons. In 1779 the Rājā of Tippera complained that owing to the failure of the rains he would have great difficulty in paying his revenue. In 1783 it was found necessary in consequence of the failure of the rains to forbid the export of grain in the months of October and November. Again in 1784 there were floods and the embankment along the Gumti gave way. The Resident wrote :—"The depth of water in any part of these *parganas* is not less than 10 feet, and in many parts is 20 feet. The memory of men does not furnish an instance of such floods." Meherkul seems to have suffered worst. At the time the only measures taken were to stop collections and repair the embankment, but in the following cold weather the *rabi* crop failed, and the people were left starving; 1,500 were fed daily by the Resident, but he estimated that 7,000 people died of the famine, and that 12,000 had gone away to other parts in search of relief.

In 1788 the Gumti embankment was breached, and the Resident complained of the difficulty of repairing it; the price of coarse rice rose to 23 seers a rupee, which was considered abnormally high, and the Collector of Chittagong sanctioned agricultural loans and temporary remissions of revenue to "meet the dreadful state of the district" and restrictions were placed on the export of food-grains.

In 1794 the Gumti embankment burst again, causing much damage, and the Resident proposed that it should either be levelled, or that permanent gaps should be made in it to allow the water to escape gradually when it passed a certain height. In 1799 the Collector reported a long and unseasonable drought which had damaged the crops on high and medium lands.

After this less mention is found of such calamities.

1800 to 1890 A.D.

"During the course of the last 20 years," the Collector reported in 1871, "only two floods have taken place, one in 1853 and one in 1870. These were partly the result of very heavy local rainfall, and partly caused by the Meghnā overflowing its banks. They inflicted considerable damage to the crops, but not such as to affect the general prosperity of the district." In 1866, when Orissa and Western Bengal were visited by the worst famine of the century, the price of rice in Tippera rose to Rs. 5 per maund, but this was paid by outsiders, and most of the people continued to eat their rice at the price it cost them to produce it,

while they received a handsome sum for their surplus stock.*

In 1893 the district was visited by a cyclone. There were heavy floods and crops and cattle were destroyed. "Those," wrote the Collector, "who had property borrowed money at usurious rates of interest rising to 25 per cent. per mensem. To others the *zamindārs* and the District Board gave gratuitous relief, and relief works were opened by the Local Boards, which gave employment to 6,451 persons, and agricultural loans were granted to 558 applicants. The distress lasted till July 1894, when the *āus* crop was harvested." In 1896-97 the early cessation of the rains injured the harvest, but there was nothing approaching famine, hardly indeed scarcity.

The winter rice crop of 1905 was much damaged by abnormal rain, prices rose rapidly, and in June 1906 the Collector reported that there was a good deal of distress, especially in the west of the district. The country was low, and it was impossible to excavate tanks or make roads in the rains, so road-metalling was started to afford work to the distressed people. The season of 1906 had begun well, but insects damaged the autumn rice, and the rain in August delayed transplantation and harvesting. Heavy floods in September breached the Gumti embankment and damaged much of the standing crops, and eventually only a 10 anna crop of winter rice was reaped. Distress was, however, confined to the poorest class of people, and there was no famine, although the price of rice rose to 6½ seers a rupee. About Rs. 6,000 were distributed for gratuitous relief, and test-works were opened, but drew a very small number of labourers. In November prices began to fall, and the crisis was over. In fact many of the cultivators had profited handsomely by high prices.

During the distress loans were given freely under the Agriculturists' Loans Act; and between 1905 and 1907 about Rs. 1,65,000 were advanced.

The northern portion of the district lies within the earthquake zone. The great earthquake of the 12th June 1897 began at about 5-15 P.M., with a roar as of a number of trains coming from the north-east; then violent oscillations from north to west or from north-east to south-west set in and lasted for nearly five minutes. In parts of Brāhmanbāria many cracks opened in the roads and *chars*, through some of which sand and water were discharged. The banks of some rivers were affected, fissures and depressions being left in them. In places, masonry buildings and old temples suffered, the total damage being estimated at Rs. 9,000.

The only embankment in the district is the Gumti embankment. This consists of two earthen banks on either side of the Gumti river from Bibir Bāzār where it debouches into the plains to Jāfarganj, a distance of 20 miles. This is a very old embank-

* Annual Report for 1872-73.

ment existing from Muhammadan times, and down to the year 1845 was maintained by Government. In that year the Commissioner of the Division suggested that its maintenance should be entrusted to the riparian proprietors, but the orders then passed cannot be traced. In the year 1866 a proposal was made that the embankment should be declared to be a public one, but this proposal was abandoned on the Mahārājā of Tippera undertaking to keep the portion lying in his State in repair, and he executed an agreement to this effect on the 26th July 1878. Since then the *zamindārs* of Chakla Roshnābād and of *parganas* Gangāmandal and Pātikāra have repaired or paid the cost of repairing the embankment. At one time breaches in this embankment were so frequent and so disastrous that its abandonment was suggested, and as an alternative the north embankment from Solanel to Jatrapur was lowered in 1893 so as to allow an easier exit to the waters in high flood.* Even so the river level during the rains is considerably above that of the surrounding country and breaches of the embankment are not infrequent. In 1906 the embankment was breached in several places, and serious damage was caused to crops over large tracts of country. The inundations caused by the breaches at Subarnapur, about four miles above Comilla and Edbarpur, about eight miles below Comilla, were specially destructive. It is said that with the extension of cultivation and the clearing of the slopes in Hill Tippera the floods come down with even greater rapidity and violence than formerly. In 1910 Mr. C. A. White, Superintending Engineer, was deputed by Government to report on the embankment.

* *Vide* report by Mr. W. A. Inglis, dated the 3rd February 1895, and the report by Mr. C. A. White, dated the May 1910.

CHAPTER IX.

COMMUNICATIONS.

In Rennell's time (circa 1787 A.D.) there were roads from Dāūdkāndi to Mahābatpur, Monoharganj, Nurnagar, and Comilla; from Chāndpur to Comilla and Monoharganj; and northwards from Comilla through Saiāil to Taraf in Sylhet; besides the present trunk road from Comilla to Chittagong; but in 1794 the Collector of Tippera reported that from the want of good substantial bridges over the creeks as well as from the many breaks in the old roads, there was no travelling except by water from the beginning of June till the ensuing October, not even for foot-passengers unless unencumbered with baggage and able to swim across the *nālās* which intersected their way. The military authorities continually urged the necessity of improving the communications, and in compliance with their demands wooden bridges were provided on the principal roads, and ferries on some of the larger rivers; but down to the year 1819 it seems to have been thought that it was the duty of the landowners to keep the roads in repair, and it was not until an examination of the *kabuliats* had shown that they imposed no such duty that the Resolution of the 20th November 1820 absolved the *zamīndārs* from being called upon to furnish any aid or to incur any expense for maintaining the roads. A special officer was then appointed to prepare a scheme for the improvement of communications, and in 1829 we find that there were roads from Dāūdkāndi to Feni, from Comilla to Lakhipur, and from Muhammadali Hāt to Noakhāli, besides others of minor extent, but there was absolutely no wheel traffic, and the only means of transport was on men's shoulders. Several roads and bridges were built in 1855 and onwards from the Ferry Fund, but there was little money to spend, Rs. 12,400 being the largest grant up to the year 1860, and in 1866 Mr. Smart wrote that the only road practicable at all seasons was that from Dāūdkāndi through Comilla to Chittagong. This road had 61 bridges, and the Jāfarganj road was also bridged, though out of repair. The secondary roads were all unbridged. In 1873 the principal roads, besides the Chittagong trunk road, were those from Comilla to Laksām, to Brāhmanbāria, to Companyganj, and to Bibir Hāt. It was then recorded that Comilla was very deficient in road communication, and that there was no cart traffic in the district. The Road Cess Act of 1871 stimulated road construction—no less than Rs. 97,000 were allotted for original works in 1875-6—and the district is now fairly well provided. Besides the Chittagong trunk road, which is under the Public Works Department, there are 12 miles of metalled and 523 miles of unmetalled roads maintained

by the District Board, and 293 miles of village tracks under the Local Boards.

Trunk road.

Leaving the Megnā at Dāūdkāndi this road runs nearly due east through Chāndina to Comilla, where it turns southward along the eastern border of the district, entering the Noakhāli district at Dattasār. Its total length in the district is 63 miles, it is bridged throughout, with a crest generally 16 feet wide. The only part that is metalled is the 3 miles near Comilla town, of which 2 miles are maintained by the Municipality. There are Public Works bungalows at Dāūdkāndi and afterwards at intervals of about 10 miles along the road.

Laksām road.

Leaving Thompson's Bridge just outside Comilla, this road runs southward for 16 miles to Laksām and Daulatganj; from there one continuation runs due south for 11 miles until it enters the Noakhāli district, while another branch, 13 miles long, connects Daulatganj with Chauddagrām on the trunk road. The road is fully bridged as far as Laksām, where there is an inspection bungalow.

Brāhmanbāria road.

Starting from the north bank of the Gumti river close to Comilla, this road runs due north for a distance of 38 miles to Brāhmanbāria, and from there on to Sarāil 7 miles further. From Sarāil village roads lead on another 5 miles to Chunta and Ajabpur. The road is bridged throughout up to Sarāil, except at Nayanpur in the 18th mile and at the Titās river, which is crossed twice by ferry. From Araibari on the 22nd mile a road branches in a north-easterly direction towards Agartala crossing the district boundary 10 miles from Araibari. Agartala is also connected by a direct road 6 miles long with Akhāura Railway Station. There are inspection bungalows at Kasbā and Brāhmanbāria.

Nabinagar road.

Leaving the trunk road 4 miles west of Comilla, this road runs north-west for a distance of 15½ miles to Companyganj on the Gumti, and from the Gumti a new road, 18 miles long, leads to Nabinagar. The road is bridged as far as the Gumti, which is crossed by a ferry, and beyond that there are two unbridged streams over which ferries ply in the rainy season. There are inspection bungalows at Jāfarganj, Companyganj and Nabinagar.

Chāndpur road.

From Lālmai on the 9th mile of the Laksām road, this road branches south-west to Mudāfarganj, a distance of 9½ miles, and from there turning nearly due west runs to Hājiganj, a distance of 12½ miles, and from there 15 miles on to Chāndpur. It is well bridged as far as Hājiganj, but beyond there the bridges are inferior. There are inspection bungalows at Mudāfarganj, Bhingra, Hājiganj and Chāndpur. From Mudāfarganj a branch runs 7 miles southwards to Chitoshi; and from Chāndpur there is a road running south-east towards Raipur in the Noakhāli district, with a bungalow at Faridganj.

Kālir Bāzār road.

The Kālir Bāzār road runs 15 miles in a south-westerly direction from Comilla, through the Lālmai Hills as far as Barura Bāzār.

iditure. These are at present the principal thoroughfares in the district. During the five years ending in 1905 the District Board spent on an average about Rs. 48,000 a year on its roads; and its resources having now been augmented by large subsidies, its expenditure has increased. In 1908-9 it spent some Rs.53,000 on maintenance, and another Rs. 56,000 on new roads. Though unmetalled, the roads have generally a fair surface, and the important thoroughfares have been planted with trees. The Board spends nearly Rs. 1,000 a year on tree-planting, and has put down already 24,000 trees. Cart traffic is becoming common, especially on the Brāhmanbāria road, and well-to-do persons often ride, but bullock carts and horses are seldom found in the west of the district. The carts of bamboo with wheels and axle tree of *karai* wood are light but carry very little. The commonest form of land transport for agricultural produce is still in two baskets balanced on a split bamboo carried on the porter's shoulder. The north of the Brāhmanbāria subdivision is badly off for roads, and much of it is too low for any but fair-weather tracks, but a new road has just been opened from Chātiān to Phandauk and one from Sarāil to Kunda is under construction.

ays. The Assam-Bengal Railway, which was opened in 1895, runs down the east of the district for a distance of about 70 miles, while from Laksām a branch runs due west to Chāndpur, a distance of 32 miles, and another branch opened in the year 1903 runs southwards to Noakhāli. On the main line a mail and three mixed trains run either way daily, and there are two trains daily to Noakhāli and back. A branch line from Akhāura, running north-west through Brāhmanbāria to the Meghnā, was opened for traffic on 1st April 1910.

ways. In spite of the improved roads and the railway, the most general means of communication in the interior is by boat. The Meghnā is the only river navigable throughout its length by large boats at all seasons of the year, but the Gumti, the Dākātiā, and the Titās, are navigable all the year round by small launches for the greater part of their course, and the Muhuri, Bijaiganga and Buriganga are navigable, for boats of 4 tons burden during at least six months of the year. Besides these, there are numerous *khāls*, natural or artificial, which are much used for navigation. Of these, the most important is the Chāndpur *khāl* excavated in the year 1872 to connect Chāndpur with Shekher Hāt on the Dākātiā. It has now grown into a wide river navigable all the year round. The Trimani *khāl*, 3 miles long from the Gumti river to the Buri Nadi at Rasulpur Hāt, excavated in the year 1878 at a cost of Rs. 2,500, has saved a five days' journey. The Gokarna *khāl* from Brāhmanbāria to the Titās river at Gokarna is 3½ miles long. It was deepened in 1875 at a cost of Rs. 8,060, but has partly silted up, and is practicable only in the rains, as is the case with the other 30 channels under the supervision of the District Board.

In 1888 the number of *khals* navigable during the rainy season was returned at 156 with a total length of over 290 miles and the river channels must amount to as much more; while in flood time small boats travel freely in every direction across the rice-fields. In the north of the district there is room for more canals and the surplus funds of the Kasimbāzār estate are being devoted to their construction.

Steamers.

A steamer runs twice a day between Akhāura and Brāhmanbāria, and on one trip goes on to Chāndurā Bāzār.* Chāndpur is connected by services with Nārāyanganj, Goalundo, Barisāl, Gharishar, and Bhairab Bāzār; and many cargo steamers, towing flats or country boats call there. Steamers on the Cachar Sundarbands line call at Āshuganj, Ajabpur Bāzār, and Chātālpār. A small steamer also plies between Gokarna and Māniknagar.

Boats.

For trade, fishing, and travelling, many kinds of boats are used; and are known by many names, though to the uninitiated eye the distinction is not always obvious. The kinds most commonly met with are the *gāch, kunda, sharanga, patam, mut, othar, lākhai, morkush.* The *gāch* is just a dug-out, made from the trunk of a big tree. The *kunda* is the form of dug-out with pent roofs of matting used by Muhammadans in the *Sadr* subdivision. The *sharanga* is the commonest boat, flat-bottomed, with pointed stem and rounded stern, made in two sizes, the smaller about 15 feet long by 3 feet wide, the larger 50 feet long by 5 feet wide. The regular fisherman's boat, *jāliā dinghi*, is longer and slenderer, with more uplifted prow. The *patam* and the *morkush* used for fishing and for carrying passengers or rice, jute, etc., are broader boats than the *sharanga*, but otherwise similar in appearance. The *kosh* is more seen in the Dacca district, but is used by Kaibarttas for fishing and by well-to-do people for travelling; it is 20 to 30 feet long with bluff ends and a carrying capacity of 100 to 125 maunds. *Gāina* boats also from Dacca, graceful curving things with high stem and stern, are often found on the Tippera rivers. The *mut*, or *mota*, is a stout little boat with a knob on the prow, used for passenger or goods traffic. *Bhāol* is a small boat, broad towards the stern and tapering into a raised prow, and is in common use for all purposes. The *othar* boat, used by Mālos for fishing with the large circular net, is a most picturesque object. It is 70 to 75 feet long with a beam of 6 to 8 feet, crescent-shaped, with tapering bow and stern that rise some 5 feet clear of the water and are commonly painted in gay colours. The long slender boat sways to the slightest ripple and the position of the fishermen poised on the uplifted extremities looks most insecure, but there is probably good reason for the adoption of this peculiar form.

Pānshi is a large plank-built boat with high ornamental prow and outrigged to give more power to the sweeps, which is used for passengers and for carrying jute. *Lākhai* is the generic term for

* Discontinued from 12th April 1910.

the big cargo boats from Sylhet, of which there are many varieties. The name is said to mean that they carry lakhs of maunds, but is in practice applied to sailing boats of about ten tons burthen and upwards. *Pātani* is a broad-beamed open boat, used for ferrying. All these boats are keelless and have rounded or flat bottoms.

Many kinds of wood are used in their construction, *jārul* (Lagerstrœmia Flos Reginæ) is considered the most durable, but *telsur* and *chaplais* also are much used. All these are obtained from the hills of Chittagong or Tippera, and boats are usually imported ready made. The seams are caulked with a pitch made from the juice of the *gāb* (Embryopteris glutinosa) boiled and mixed with charcoal.

There were 32 ferries in 1904-05 in charge of the District Board. They are served usually by open boats, there being few decked boats for the transport of carriages and carts.

CHAPTER X.

GENERAL ADMINISTRATION.

Administrative charges and staff.

Since the year 1859 the executive control of the district has been vested in a single officer, who in his capacity of Collector is responsible for all branches of revenue administration; as District Magistrate is the chief magisterial officer, with power to hear appeals from magistrates of the second and third class, and head of the police; as Chairman of the District Board looks after the communications, sanitation, and primary education of the district; as Registrar supervises registration; and in all matters, even in those appertaining to Imperial or specialised departments, acts as the eye and hand of the Local Government. In 1907 the Collector's duties had become so onerous that it was found necessary to relieve him by the appointment of an Additional District Magistrate, an officer junior to him but with co-ordinate powers on the Magistrate's side and capable of acting independently.

The sanctioned staff for general administration, excluding that at the subdivisions, is six Deputy Collectors, officers of either the Imperial or Provincial Civil Service, of whom five should have powers of Magistrates of the first class and the sixth powers of a lower grade, and one Sub-Deputy Collector. There are two outlying subdivisions: Brāhmanbāria, constituted in 1860, for which the staff sanctioned consists of a Subdivisional Officer aided by one Magistrate of the first class and a Sub-Deputy Collector with magisterial powers; and Chāndpur formed in 1878, of which the staff is a Subdivisional Officer and two Sub-Deputy Collectors. The functions of Subdivisional Officers are chiefly magisterial and, except in the case of Government estates, they have little to do with revenue and the specialised departments; but as executive officers they are responsible for the welfare of their charges and for keeping the Collector informed of all matters of importance.

Revenue.

The net revenue of the district in the year 1850-51 amounted to Rs. 9,93,000; in 1870-71 it was Rs. 12,19,000 and the expenditure of the district was Rs. 16,800. In 1900-01 the gross revenue had risen to Rs. 24,42,000, and in 1907-08 it was Rs. 27,02,000, of which Rs. 10,95,000 were derived from land revenue,* Rs. 10,41,000 from stamps, Rs. 2,72,000 from cesses, Rs. 1,51,000 from excise, Rs. 84,000 from registration, and Rs. 59,000 from income-tax.

The figures given do not include the sum assessed on the villagers for the rural police, about Rs. 2,31,000; nor the local

* For details regarding Land Revenue, see next Chapter, page 82.

taxation (other than the road cess) which is about Rs. 75,000; and counting these in the taxation of the district amounts to Rs. 30,09,000 a year, or approximately one rupee five annas per head of the population as it stood in that year, at least 2,320,000 souls.

ps. Stamps in the year 1850 brought in only Rs. 42,000, and twenty years later Rs. 1,84,000. For the five years ending in 1901 they yielded on an average Rs. 7,11,000 annually, in the next quinquennium Rs. 8,96,000; and during the following four years Rs. 10,13,000. The steady increase was ascribed by the Commissioner of the Division to the progress which the people are making, to their growing tendency to settle disputes in the Law Courts, and to the increase in the number of transactions consequent on the increase of trade and business. Three-quarters of the receipts in 1908-09 were due to the sale of judicial stamps, mostly court-fee stamps.

es. A cess on lands and houses for the maintenance of communications was imposed first under Bengal Act X of 1871, the rate fixed in 1872 being two pies per rupee of annual value and that for 1875-76 six pies, producing Rs. 95,000.

Bengal Act IX of 1880 empowered the Collector to levy a road cess and a public works cess on the annual value of all immovable property in the district at a rate, not exceeding half an anna in the rupee for either cess, to be determined by the Road Cess Committee (now the District Board); the proceeds of the road cess to be paid to that Committee and that of the public works cess to be devoted to provincial public works and to subsidies to the district road fund. These cesses are now levied at the maximum rate, and in 1907-08 the current demand was Rs. 2,57,021, and the collections Rs. 2,72,335, while the net moiety credited to the District Board was Rs. 1,17,212. The road cess is increasing rapidly and the current demand in 1892-93 was only Rs. 2,17,220.

e. The receipts from excise were only Rs 8,000 in the year 1850-51, but after that there was a rapid increase and by 1870 they were Rs. 40,000, and were Rs. 79,000 in 1892-93, Rs. 1,15,000 in 1900-01, and Rs. 1,62,000 in 1905-06. The scarcity in the succeeding years checked consumption, but in 1908-09 with good harvests the receipts rose to Rs. 1,83,000; the largest items being Rs. 66,000 from country spirit; Rs. 14,000 from opium, and Rs. 95,000 from *gānjā*. Country spirit is produced on the outstill system and there are 32 licensed outstills; up to 1897-98 it brought in only Rs. 26,000, but since then the receipts have gone up fast, probably owing to the numbers of up-country coolies on the railway and at Chāndpur. The receipts from imported liquor, which in the form of cheap German spirit was popular with the upper and middle classes, reflect in a striking manner the tendencies of the time. They had reached Rs. 13,000 in 1905-06, but dropped next year below Rs. 4,000 and are now just under

Rupees 6,000. Under recent orders the sale of foreign spirit below a fixed strength is prohibited and this will doubtless check the demand. More than half of the total revenue (Rs. 96,000) in 1907-08 was obtained from the duty and license fees on hemp drugs. The income from this source is greater than in any other district of the province except Mymensingh, Dacca and Sylhet, but amounts to less than one anna per head of the population. It is almost entirely derived from the consumption of *gānjā* (Canabis indica), *i.e.*, the dried flowering tops of the cultivated female hemp plant and the resinous exudation on them, which is sold in 51 shops. But opium shows the greatest and most unbroken increase. In 1892-93 it yielded under Rs. 5,000 and in 1907-08 over Rs. 14,000. It is eaten, not smoked, but more stigma attaches to its consumption than to that of *gānjā*. There is very little smuggling, except that *gānjā* is occasionally brought into the district from Hill Tippera.

Income-Tax.

Income-tax has been imposed and again taken off at intervals during the last hundred years. In 1870-71 a tax at $3\frac{1}{8}$ per cent. on all incomes of over Rs. 500 produced Rs. 73,000. By Act II of 1886 an income-tax was imposed on incomes of over Rs. 500 not derived from land, the maximum and usual rate being five pies per rupee. In 1901-02 this tax yielded Rs. 46,865 paid by 1,754 assessees, of whom 1,185 paying Rs. 13,000 had incomes of Rs. 500 to Rs. 1,000. In 1903 incomes of under Rs. 1,000 were exempted, thereby giving relief to a large body of petty traders, money-lenders and clerks; and the number of assessees consequently fell in 1903-04 to 918 and the collections to Rs. 47,000. In 1908-09 the tax yielded Rs. 60,000 paid by 1,078 assessees. The increase in collections is attributed to an advance in the material prosperity of the people and a steady access of wealth from trade, which has received a great impetus from the policy of railway extension.

Registration.

There are 21 offices for the registration of assurances under Act III of 1877. At Comilla the Special Sub-Registrar deals as usual with the documents presented there and also assists the District Magistrate, who is *ex-officio* District Registrar, in supervising the proceedings of the Rural Sub-Registrars who are in charge of the other registration offices. The average number of documents registered annually during the quinquennium ending in 1899 was 60,000, and increased in the five years ending in 1904 to 70,000. In 1908 the total number of documents registered was 84,137, and the aggregate value of the property affected upwards of Rs.94,00,000. The most important classes of deeds were instruments of sale and gift to the value of nearly Rs. 45,00,000, mortgages to the value of over Rs. 30,00,000 and leases over Rs. 5,00,000. In the case of only 8,041 documents the registration was optional. The gross receipts were Rs. 83,772, and the expenditure Rs. 52,423. A temporary check in 1905 to the growth of registration was attribu-

ted to the belief that with the annexation of the district to Assam rights of occupancy would be abolished, a curious sidelight on politics among the masses.

tration rriages.

In old times Muhammadan marriages were celebrated by the *kāzis* who were appointed for every *pargana* and were paid by fixed fees. The East India Company took away the right of the *kāzis* to demand such fees, and in 1864 Government ceased to appoint *kāzis*. From that time marriages have been celebrated by any person who calls himself and is recognised by the villagers as a *kāzi*, and the absence of any record caused much trouble, especially in case of divorce. Bengal Act I of 1876 first provided for the appointment of Registrars of Muhammadan marriages, and Act XII of 1880 provided for the appointment of *kāzis*. A Registrar is entitled to a fee of Re. 1 for registration and to receive any gratuity that may be offered him, a *kāzi's* fees for officiating at any ceremony are regulated purely by agreement. In 1907-08, fourteen Registrars had been appointed in Tippera under this Act, and had registered over 4,500 marriages and divorces. All these Registrars have been appointed also to be *kāzis*. Only a small proportion of marriages are registered, but it is usual to register divorces.

s.

There are 119 cattle pounds in Tippera under the control of the District Board, which farms them out and derives therefrom a net income of about Rs. 3,000 a year. Five years ago there were 136 pounds and they brought in over Rs. 8,000 a year, but it is said that the high prices of recent years have made it worth the cultivator's while to pay herdsmen (*band-rākhāl*) to guard their crops and that in consequence few cattle find their way to the pounds.

llage

The village watch is in most parts of India an indigenous municipal institution, but in the lands lying on the east of the Meghnā the early English governors found no trace of either village watch or communal system, and it is uncertain whether they had ever existed. Doubtless the *zamīndārs* were bound to keep up a force for the preservation of the peace and for dealing with crime, but it is clear that after the permanent settlement if not before, this duty was entirely neglected. It was long before this fact was realised, and the nineteenth century was well on its way before anything was done to repair the defect. In 1812 Mr. Paton, then Magistrate of the District, in an explanation of the causes of the frequent commission of dacoity and burglary, wrote: "no village watchman whatever employed by the landholders in support of the police," and again, "at present no assistance whatever is afforded by the few *gurwas* and *mandals* kept by the landlords for their own personal convenience." Shortly after this a start was made, and in 1828 the Magistrate, Mr. Thompson, reported that on taking charge of the district he found the police in a most disordered state, the chaukīdāri establishment merely nominal, and

crime rampant. He appointed chaukīdārs, making the landholders responsible for information of all heinous offences committed within their estates being conveyed to the Magistrate direct, and to ensure vigilance and activity on the part of the watchmen he issued an order that two men of the village should accompany them on their rounds.

In 1840 there was a watchman to every fifty houses, and his pay was met by a tax of one anna per house per month, though it seems that rather less was realised in practice.*

In 1866 Mr. Browne, the Superintendent of Surveys, wrote: "The nominal number of the village watchmen amount to no less than 3,232, but there can be little doubt that this large body of watchmen only exists on paper. The whole area of the district is 2,647 square miles, and it is impossible to have resided any length of time in the district without disbelieving in the existence of one chaukidār in every square mile and 585 over. The pay of the chaukidārs is as fabulous as their numbers, except in the case of Government estates in which they receive Rs. 4 a month. Those paid by *zamīndārs* are supposed to receive from Rs. 2 to Rs. 3 a month in some shape or other."†

The statistical account of the district gives the number of the rural police in 1872 as 3,094.

In 1876 the provisions of the Bengal Chaukīdāri Act, Bengal Act I of 1870, were applied to the district, and chaukīdārs were henceforward paid from rates levied on the villagers, the assessment of the rates and the control and payment of the chaukīdārs being entrusted to a committee of five villagers styled a *panchāyat*. In 1899 the villages were grouped into 'unions' each under a *panchāyat*, and in 1905 in pursuance of a scheme for the utilisation of *panchāyats* on general administration and for making the chaukīdār more independent of the thānā police, the grouping of villages and the appointments of *panchāyats* were revised by selected officers under the general direction of the Hon. Mr. H. Savage. The villages throughout the district are now grouped in 294 unions, each of which is administered by a *panchāyat* of four members and a President. The chaukīdārs were placed under the orders of the President and absolved to some extent from attendance at the police station, a *dafadār* or head watchman being appointed to each union as a link between the police and the *panchāyat*. It was, however, found necessary in 1907, owing to the disturbed state of the district, to revert to the system whereby the chaukīdār attends every week or every fortnight at the police station to report what has been happening in his charge. The Presidents of the *panchāyats* were vested with magisterial powers enabling

* This account is taken from Mr. D. J. McNeile's Report on the Village Watch (1866).

† General Report on the Tippera District, by J. F. Browne, Esq., C.S. (1866), page 16.

them to arrest persons committing an offence in their presence, to disperse unlawful assemblies, and to hold inquests. They have not been empowered to try cases, but criminal complaints are often sent to them for enquiry and they arrange compromises. One of the collective duties of the *panchāyats* is to act as arbitrators in petty civil disputes, but these are seldom referred to them. Another feature of the scheme was the service of processes by *dafadārs*. In Tippera only revenue processes in which delay is immaterial are served in this way. As the supervision of this experiment entails much work a special officer has been sanctioned for the purpose in each subdivision. In 1908 there were 294 *dafadārs* and 3,000 *chaukīdārs*, and their pay was Rs. 6 and Rs. 5 a month respectively.

After a good deal of vacillation between the policy of making the *zamīndārs* responsible for the maintenance of peace and that of establishing a special agency for the purposes, the East India Company decided in the year 1792 on the latter course. They directed the division of the district into *thānās*, each of which was to have on the average an area of ten *kos* square (400 square miles), and was to be in charge of a *daroga* with a staff of *barkandāzes*.

In course of time these *thānās* became the unit of revenue as well as of criminal administration, and have practically superseded the *pargana*.

In 1858 A.D. the district (excluding Chhāgalnaiya) was divided into eleven *thānās*, *kotwāli* or Comilla, Barkāmtā, Dāūdkāndi, Thorla, Laksām, Jagannāthdighi, Kasbā, Nāsirnagar, Gauripura, Jubki Bāzār, and Hājiganj, and there were 15 outposts. Up to 1875 the only change was that of the name of Nāsirnagar to Brāhmanbāria – the change of site had been made before—but the number of police outposts had been reduced to two, Nāsirnagar, and Marichakāndi under *thānā* Gauripura. In 1876 the name of Barkāmtā was changed to Chāndina, and in 1878 *thānā* Thorla was renamed Morādnagar. In the same year *thānās* Jubki Bāzār and Gauripura were removed to Chāndpur and Nabinagar respectively and renamed accordingly. In 1887 Matlab outpost was carved out of Hājiganj, and in 1895 was elevated to the position of a *thānā*. In 1889 the outpost of Bāncharāmpur subordinate to Nabinagar was established *vice* Marichakāndi; and in 1905 an outpost was established at Homna in the jurisdiction of Dāūdkāndi. Jagannāthdighi has been renamed Chauddagrām.

There are at present 12 *thānās* and three outposts. A list of the *thānās* and their areas and population has been given on page 23. Nāsirnagar and Bāncharāmpur have been declared to be police stations for the purpose of the Code of Criminal Procedure, but no such declaration has yet been made as regards Homna. Besides these, there are town outposts in Comilla, Chāndpur and Brāhmanbāria. The police appointed in 1792 were paid from the proceeds of a tax on traders and shopkeepers and were stimulated by the grant of rewards for the apprehension

of offenders. They were directly under the Magistrate. In 1795 a company of the Chittagong militia (*Sebandi*) battalion, 50 men under native officers, was enrolled and placed under the Collector's orders to perform the duties of both regular troops and *barkandāzes*. They were decently paid, the sepoys getting Rs. 5 a month, a large sum in those days.* In 1857 it was decided to raise a force of armed and drilled police to take the place of the militia, which had ceased to exist not long before, and the Magistrate was told to enlist not more than 160 men, who were to get Rs. 6 each. After several minor changes the police force was constituted on its present footing under Act V of 1861, a Superintendent of Police being appointed to each district to hold charge under the general control of the Magistrate, while an Inspector-General was appointed to supervise the whole police force of the province. Recently the police work has grown so heavy that in the year 1907 a second officer was appointed to it with the powers of a Superintendent of Police. In 1909 the total police force of the district consisted of 2 Superintendents, 6 Inspectors, 42 Sub-Inspectors, 45 Head Constables, and 347 Constables, of whom (excluding the armed reserves and the police employed about the courts) the number available for dealing with ordinary crime was 3 Inspectors, 33 Sub-Inspectors, 30 Head Constables, and 181 Constables. A head-quarters force of 50 Constables, armed and drilled under a European Inspector, is kept to deal with serious disturbances.

Crime. At the beginning of the nineteenth century, owing to defective communications and the want of rural police, crime was practically uncontrolled; but the district soon settled down, and the returns of 1842 showed so little crime that the Superintendent of Police (an officer corresponding to the present Inspector-General) was of opinion that much must remain unreported. In 1866 the Superintendent of the Revenue Survey wrote: "I have always been much struck by the scarcity of dacoity and other gang robberies in this zilla as compared with Dinājpur and Rangpur and other parts of Bengal." The number of persons convicted or bound over has varied during the last 15 years between 2,700 and 3,400 every year, and shows no marked tendency to increase, though since the introduction of the new *panchāyat* system the number of offences reported has increased, and in 1908 was 7,892. Rioting, often attended with homicide, is common, and generally arises from disputes about land, which is of great value, while owing to sub-infeudation the title is often most uncertain; the presence of lawyers' touts in the villages tends to foster the disputes, and it is said that the Tippera peasant is excitable and prone to sudden fits of fury—when these are on him he will fight about anything. Incendiarism is resorted to as a safe and effective means of injuring an enemy, and the Commissioner of the Division in his last quinquennial report stated that the figures scarcely gave an idea of the

* Governor-General's orders of the 6th June 1795.

extent to which the people lived in fear of having their houses burnt down, a fear that gives many bad characters practical immunity from prosecution.

The destruction of cattle for the sake of their hides, the animals being taken from the yard or stable by night and killed and skinned in a neighbouring field, is peculiarly frequent and the offenders are rarely caught.

The making and passing of false coins is another common offence. Crimes of violence are most prevalent in the Brāhmanbāria subdivision, where the right of grazing cattle in the *bīls* and of cultivating their beds offers a perennial subject of dispute, but the Subdivisional Officer states that in the neighbourhood of the head-quarters station the people usually take their feuds to court, though they have not ceased to have recourse to the *lāthi.* Perjury and forgery are rife in the courts, and appear to have been so as far back as our records extend.

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The Sessions Judge tries serious crime sitting with assessors, and hears appeals from all Magistrates of the first class. He shares with two other districts the assistance of an Additional District and Sessions Judge, who has co-ordinate powers but takes up only cases allotted him. One of the Subordinate Judges has also been vested with the powers of an Assistant Sessions Judge, and tries cases of less gravity. He cannot inflict more than seven years' imprisonment. Most criminal cases are, however, decided by Magistrates. In 1908 the District Magistrate tried 134 and Subordinate Magistrates 4,529 cases, while only 46 came before the Court of Session. The District Magistrate heard 281 appeals and the Sessions Judge, 318.

ary
rates.

The regular magistracy were in 1909 assisted by twelve Honorary Magistrates, of whom nine had power to sit singly, and the rest sat only as members of the benches at Chāndpur and Brāhmanbāria. Two of them sitting at Binauti * and at Kastā took cognisance of offences committed within the jurisdiction of the local police stations, but the others tried only cases made over to them by the District or Subdivisional Magistrates.

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: Civil
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The staff entertained for the administration of civil justice consists of the District Judge, three Sub-Judges and 16 Munsifs, *viz.*, six Munsifs of Comilla, three Munsifs of Brāhmanbāria, three Munsifs of Chāndpur, two Munsifs of Kasbā and two Munsifs of Nabinagar. The Additional District and Sessions Judge sanctioned for Dacca, Tippera and Sylhet, does chiefly criminal work. In 1908 the number of original civil suits instituted was 41,578, *viz.*, money suits 19,559, rent suits 15,980 and title suits 6,039. Litigation varies a good deal, but cannot be said to be on the increase. In 1893 less than 29,000 cases were instituted; but seven years later the number had risen to 43,000 and the maximum of 47,000 cases was reached in 1904.

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* Both these Magistrates have died lately.

The subsequent decrease is attributed to the settlement of Chakla Roshnābād, and to the transfer of the management of the Kāsimbāzār estates and those of the Nawāb of Dacca to the Court of Wards. From the earliest days a succession of officers have characterised the people as excessively litigious, and litigation is said to be their favourite recreation.

There is a second class district jail at Comilla with accommodation for 286 convicts and 16 under-trial prisoners. Some 1,600 convicts and nearly 500 under-trial prisoners were admitted to it during the year 1908, and the average daily population was 428. It is a healthy jail—the daily population of sick in 1908 having been only 28, in spite of overcrowding—and it has been decided to enlarge it and convert it into a central jail. **Jails.**

There are subsidiary jails at Chāndpur and Brāhmanbāria for the detention of prisoners for short periods.

The Indian Arms Act, 1878, is in force throughout the district, and under its provisions licenses for the possession of 1,356 fire-arms were in force in the year 1908. Of these 110 only were for breech-loaders, and nearly all the licenses were granted for the purpose of personal protection and display; indeed, guns are not much needed for the destruction of wild animals, as, during the year 1908, only one tiger and one leopard were killed and only 2 men and 9 head of cattle were killed by such animals. One license for the manufacture, conversion and sale of arms and ammunition had been given. There were no persons living in the district in 1908 exempted as being great landholders of Bengal and only one exempted for special services. **Arms Act.**

Portions of the district were surveyed at very early periods; for instance, Baldakhāt and Gangāmandal were measured in 1789 by Mr. Pym and Nurnagar was surveyed by Mr. John Buller about the year 1791, but in these early measurements maps were not prepared, and at the conclusion of the revenue survey Mr. Browne reported that "the Collector had been in possession of numerous village lists and some worm-eaten records, showing the estimated area of each estate, but as in most cases they had not been deduced from any measurement, such data were to a great extent worthless." The revenue survey began in December 1861 and was finished in May 1864; 462 maps were prepared on a scale of 4 inches to one mile, exhibiting the boundaries and topography of 4,377 villages with alphabetical lists and statistical statements.* These revenue survey villages constitute the village under the revenue law and ought to form the basis of the lists maintained in the Collector's office. In practice, however, it seems that they do not do so; for the reason we may refer in the first instance to the account of the survey circuits (villages) and their definition given by Mr. J. F. Browne. **Surveys and Settlements.**

* Mr. Smart's Geographical and Statistical Report on the Tippera District, Chapter IV.

"The locality," he says, "of a landed property in the district, has been fully defined by means of so-called *halkas* or circuits. The outer boundary of each has been carefully laid down in the first instance by the aid of chain and compass, and subsequently tested by native surveyors acquainted with the use of the theodolite, whose measures have again been carefully checked by highly trained European surveyors. The number of so-called survey circuits is 4,426, and the number of villages appertaining to them is over 8,089; the cause of this discrepancy between the two totals is twofold, one is that according to the survey practice when two or three small villages belong to one estate, they are often lumped up into one circuit; the second is that many so-called villages are small bits of land dignified with that name, because they are so noted in the Collector's list." The Chakla Roshnābād estate contained 905 *thāks* (circuits) of the revenue survey, and the same area comprised 2,379 *mauzas* (revenue villages) according to the Collector's register. In the cadastral survey made in 1892-94 both units were found inconvenient, and the demarcation then made gave the number of villages as 1,514. Owing to the re-adjustment of boundaries the present number of revenue villages in the district is 4,136, but in the census of 1901 the rural area was divided into 5,361 villages. The Magistrate in his report on that census states that the villages or village areas demarcated in the survey of Chakla Roshnābād often contained more than one inhabited settlement. As regards the *mauzas*, shown in the Collector's registers as 6,314 in number, he stated that many of the revenue survey boundaries were unknown and many of the *mauza* names were obsolete. As far as possible, however, the inhabited villages, which form the basis of the census and are used in police administration, have been identified with the revenue survey villages.*

In 1879-80 the survey of the *diārā* or riverside lands of the district was revised by professional agency, and necessary corrections made.

The revenue survey, though it showed the boundaries of villages and estates, and the salient topographical features, did not show fields or individual holdings. Village maps and lists showing these have been prepared in the cadastral survey of Chakla Roshnābād for an area of 558 square miles, in the survey of *pargana* Sarāil in 1881 for about 277 square miles, and for some 33 square miles of the Pātikārā estate in 1905. Besides these, similar maps and tables were prepared in the years 1896—1900 for 95 temporarily settled and Government estates, mostly in *pargana* Bardakhāt, covering some 65 square miles, and since then for another 80 estates with an aggregate area of 50 square miles, besides four villages of the Gangāmandal estate settled by Mr. Cumming in 1897.

Office. In 1909 there were 130 post offices in the district, namely, one head post office, 26 sub-post offices, and 103 branch and

* In the Census of 1911 the Revenue Survey village will be the unit.

experimental offices. From twelve of these offices telegrams are sent and received, and there is also one independent telegraph office in Comilla. There has been a great expansion of postal business of late years. In 1899 there were only 80 post offices, and the value of the money-orders issued was 17½ lakhs and that of those received, 9 lakhs of rupees. In 1909 the value of the money-orders issued was 31 lakhs of rupees and that of those received just half the amount. From the very earliest times of British administration the post seems to have been carried with creditable regularity and despatch between Comilla, Calcutta and Chittagong, and down to the year 1906 the operations of the regular post office were supplemented by a district post paid from the proceeds of the *zamindāri* dak-cess, amounting to about Rs. 5,000 levied on 1,000 estates, but this cess and the district post for which it paid have been abolished.

Over four million letters a year are received in the post offices of the district.

Presses and Newspapers.

There are ten registered printing presses in the district. One weekly and two monthly newspapers are printed in Comilla, and Brāhmanbāria and Chāndpur have each a paper of their own. The circulation of these periodicals varies from 200 to 500 copies, and they exercise very little influence.

CHAPTER XI.

LAND REVENUE ADMINISTRATION.

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ions.

There are no records of the revenue administration of the Tipperas before their country came under Mughal influence. In 1582 A.D., when Todar Mal prepared the revenue roll of the Mughal Empire, the Rājās of Tippera were still unconquered, and Eastern Bengal was in the possession of almost independent rulers, of whom Isā Khān of Khizrpur was the chief. Still the whole of the present district of Tippera, except Chakla Roshnābād, appears in his roll. The principle on which the assessment was made is as follows:—The revenue of each village was calculated, and the villages were grouped in *parganas*, or fiscal divisions, each of which was in charge of one person, either a *zamīndār*, who was usually a pre-existing proprietor, Hindu or Muhammadan, or a *Chaudhuri* who was a manager on behalf of the Nawāb. The *parganas* in turn were classed into *sarkārs*, each in charge of an *āmil* or superintendent. In the original distribution the eastern portion of the district of Tippera was included in *sarkār* Sonārgāon, and *pargana* Sarāil in the north in *sarkār* Sylhet. In 1638 the roll was revised by Shāh Shuja, and the plains districts in the possession of the Rājā of Tippera were included under the name of *sarkār* Udaipur. In 1722 the assessment was again revised by Mir Jāfir and *sarkār* Sonārgāon, to which Sarāil had been transferred, and *sarkār* Udaipur were included in the circle or *chakla* of Jahāngirnagar. In 1758 Chakla Jahāngirnagar comprised 241 whole or broken *parganas* divided into 412 farms, grouped, for the purpose of the assessment of *abwābs*, into *Ehtimāms*, or Trusts, one of which, Jalālpur, et cetera, comprised all or most of the *parganas* that form the district. New *parganas* were formed under early British administration. Thus the 30 farms into which Chakla Roshnābād was divided for a short while all came to be called *parganas*. In course of time most *parganas* were split up, and portions of several often passed into the possession of one proprietor, so that confusion of the lands resulted. Moreover, the *parganas* were not always solid blocks within a ring fence, but comprised villages intermingled with those of other proprietors. So it is not surprising that there should have been differences in the enumeration of the *parganas*: thus Mr. Smart showed 165, Mr. Browne 122, while the official number in 1873-74 was 117. There are now 73, counting Chakla Roshnābād as one; but these divisions have little more than a historic interest.

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Before considering the settlements made by the East India Company in other parts of the district, it will be well to turn to the history of Chakla Roshnābād. In 1628, or about that time, *sarkār* Udaipur was settled with Rājā Kalyān Mānikya for

Rupees 99,860. The areas given in the accounts show that the Mughals did not trouble themselves about the hilly country. At the beginning of the 18th century Tippera was again free, and the Rājās had ceased paying tribute.

In the time of Sirāj-ud-daula Tippera or Roshnābād consisted of 24 *parganas*, 20 of *sarkār* Udaipur and 4 of *sarkār* Sonārgaon, and it was settled with Jagat Mānikya for Rs. 92,993; but of this amount Rs. 25,000 was remitted on account of *pargana* Nurnagar, the whole of which was the Rājā's *jāgīr*, and another Rs. 20,000 as compensation for elephant-catching. By the inclusion of *pargana* Dāūdpur, and the imposition of a *kaifiyat*, or charge for profits, really equivalent to the enhancement of the original rate of assessment, the total demand had in the year 1757 been raised to Rs. 1,84,751, but in 1761 the nominal assessment was only Rs. 1,00,001 *sicca*. The amount was changed to Rs. 1,05,000 in 1765, to Rs. 1,50,602 in 1766, and to Rs. 1,33,001 in 1769. It is, however, stated in a letter of the Collector of Tippera, dated the 29th February 1792, that even for a few years after the date of the *dīwāni* grant the revenue was collected only by military compulsion and that the first regular settlement made was in the year 1776. Down to the year 1780, annual settlements continued to be made. In 1781 the Rājā refused to engage for the revenue of Rs. 1,68,000, declaring his inability to pay, and the Resident asked for troops from Chittagong and Mymensingh alleging that the Rājā was raising men with a view to defy the Company's authority. He was ordered to make no attempt to arrest the Rājā and to let the plains portion of Tippera in farm. Mr. Leake, who was then Resident, represented that the Rājā was incapable of managing the estate, and proposed to settle the province of Tippera with the *chaudhuris* or other under-renters on whom he could rely, leaving the Rājā in possession of the hills. This proposal was approved by the Board of Revenue and the 'province' was divided into thirty *parganas* or *mahāls* and settled either with the old *chaudhuris* or with new ones who could give better security.* In 1786 Rājdhar Mānikya, who had succeeded his uncle, petitioned to be allowed to take settlement of the estate, but the Board refused to agree, and it was not till the year 1793 that Chakla Roshnābād was finally settled with him for Rs. 1,39,676 sicca. With the adjustments made subsequently the revenue now comes to Rs. 1,52,511. From a letter of the 11th May 1787 it appears that the Rājā's *mushahara* or allowance was then Rs. 1,000 a month.

Other Estates.

In 1772 the Board of Directors decided to let the existing estates in farm for a period of five years. In 1777 instructions were issued for a fresh settlement for the same period, but this time preference was to be given to the *zamīndārs* if willing to engage for the amount of the former settlement, and after this

* Collector's letter of the 29th February 1792.

period had expired settlement for short terms continued to be made down to the year 1793, when permanent settlement was offered to the *zamīndārs*. The application of the orders for the decennial settlement of Bengal (Regulation of 10th February 1790) was postponed in the case of Tippera.

ks. Even before the accession of the East India Company to the *dīwāni* the *zamīndārs* had alienated many of their lands, either so as to promote reclamation or to provide for relations and dependants, and some of these *tālukdārs* had been allowed the privilege of paying their revenue directly into the Dacca Treasury. In the farming settlements of the early years of the Company's administration, the existence of these *tāluks* constituted a great difficulty. When the *zamīndār* failed to pay, and the Collector attempted to realise the rents directly through his own officers, the *tālukdārs* not infrequently combined with the proprietors and the ryots to throw every possible difficulty in his way. In 1790 it was decided to permit certain classes of *tālukdārs* (*vide* section 5, Regulation 8 of 1793,) to separate their lands from those of the parent estate and engage directly for the payment of their quota of the revenue. They were encouraged to apply for such separation, but were not bound to do so if they preferred to pay through the *zamīndārs*. The revenue was to be assessed on separated (*khārij*) *tāluks*, so as to leave to the proprietors a provision of 10 per cent. of the gross assets, including the produce of their private lands. It is a point of much importance in connection with Tippera that the regulations expressly exclude *Jangal-buri tāluks*, or tenures created for the purpose of reclaiming forest-covered or waste land, from the list of those the proprietors of which could claim separation, for a large proportion of the tenures in Tippera were of that nature, or, to use the local name, *ābādi tāluks*.

nue- ands. Besides these *tāluks* or rent-paying tenures the East India Company found in existence many grants of land free of all rent or revenue, some made by the Mughal emperors or the governors of Bengal, but many also by subordinate officers or by the *zamīndārs* themselves. In one case the Collector of Tippera had to refer for orders the question of the validity of such grants made by a Commercial Agent of the Company. As early as the year 1782 a *Bāze-Zamīn Daftar* was formed in order to obtain complete particulars of the alienated lands, and Regulation XIX of 1793 prescribed what classes of grants should be deemed valid and provided for the assessment of those declared invalid. All grants made before the year 1765, in which the grantee had obtained possession, were declared valid. The grants made subsequent to that date but before the year 1790 were valid only if confirmed by the Government, and grants made after 1790 were declared null and void whatever the length of possession. Government claimed for itself only the revenue from resumed grants of more than a hundred *bighas*, leaving it

to the *zamindārs* to enjoy the profits of the resumption of smaller areas. Notwithstanding the express injunctions contained in this Regulation a long time elapsed before the claims were investigated and the invalid grants were resumed, and the Regulations II of 1819, IX of 1825, and III of 1828, had to be passed to determine the procedure to be followed. Eventually 191 grants were resumed, and 78 were confirmed as revenue-free estates, while 173 more, each less than 100 *bighas* in extent, were released without enquiry into their validity.

In the year 1874 Government sold to the Rājā of Hill Tippera the Lālmai and Mainamāti hills, measuring 6,490 acres, free of revenue for a sum of Rs 21,100. The conveyance gives to the Rājā the mineral and forest rights throughout the hills, but subjects him to a liability to maintain and repair the roads passing through the hills towards Kāli Bāzār and Jāfarganj and the boundary pillars of the estate. Besides these classes of revenue-free lands, a few small estates, formerly in the *khās* possession of Government, have been redeemed by the proprietors at ten years' purchase. In all, there are now shown in the Collector's registers 269 revenue-free estates with a total area of 14,582 acres. These figures take no account of small revenue-free grants included in revenue-paying estates, nor of the grants within the ambit of Chakla Roshnābād, for under an agreement made in 1842 with Mahārājā Kishan Kishor Mānik Bahādur Government agreed to desist from all resumption proceedings in Chakla Roshnābād in consideration of an addition of Rs. 4,753-3-7 to the land revenue of that estate.

The cess returns of 1907-08 show 4,218 rent-free holding assessed separately.

Temporarily settled estates.

The *zamīndāris* composed of whole or broken *parganas*, the separated *tāluks*, and the resumed grants, were all settled in perpetuity and constitute the permanently settled estates of the district. Besides these there are at present 56 temporarily settled estates. Forty-two of these are what are known as the Bardakhāt *tāluks*. In 1835 and 1836 a large portion of *pargana* Bardakhāt was brought to sale for arrears of revenue, and bought in by Government. It was then foundt hat the forme r proprietor had granted many *āluks* at very low rents in consideration of the payment of large premia. The estate was held under direct management for some time, and the Collector made an enquiry into the nature of the tenures of which eventually 52 were recognised as valid and were settled temporarily with their owners, and have since been re-settled for terms of from 15 to 30 years, in most cases with considerable enhancement of the revenue.*

Khās Mahāls.

In 1908-09 there were 248 estates shown as under direct management, but of these 73 consisted of plots of land taken up by the Railway and no longer required, and have been sold, and

* For the status of the other tenures, *vide* Khajah Assanoollah *v.* Obhoy Chundar Roy, XIII, Moore's Indian Appeals, p. 317.

50 have diluviated completely. The number actually under the Collector's management was 134 with an area of 34,082 acres, and a land revenue of Rs. 70,885. Some of these have been bought in at sales for arrears of revenue, as is the case with *pargana* Gunanandi purchased in 1835 and Singhergāon in 1834. Others consist of alluvial formations in the bed of the Meghnā which have been taken possession of by Government under the Regulations and let out to ryots. Among these may be mentioned Chars Hime and Bhairab resumed in 1870, Char Ishān Bālo in 1873, and Char Nil Kamal Dutt in 1876. Besides these larger estates there are many small plots of roadside or railside lands that go to swell the number. At one time there were a very large number of these *khās mahāls*. In 1827 it was reported that there were 82 *chars* formed since 1793 liable to assessment, and though many of these were subsequently settled in perpetuity with neighbouring proprietors, there were in 1836 still 589 *khās mahāls* on the Collectorate registers, of which 122 could not be found. Since then a good many small estates have been sold, several were settled in perpetuity under Government Orders of the 7th March 1898, and others have been settled for varying periods.

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Regulations VIII and XLIV of 1793 prohibited the leasing of revenue-paying lands for more than ten years, except for the construction of houses and buildings, or for gardens or similar purposes. Nevertheless proprietors continued to grant such leases, and Regulation V of 1812 withdrew the prohibition, but left all such tenures liable to resumption in case the estate was sold for arrears of revenue.

Finally Regulation VIII of 1819 declared leases and engagements for more than ten years or in perpetuity to be good and valid and laid down special provisions for a class of tenure known as a *pātni tāluk*, in which the revenue is fixed in perpetuity and arrears can be recovered by the landlord by a process similar to that by which Government recovers its revenue. It is impossible to give the numbers of tenures of different classes in the district, but they are generally similar to those in other parts of Bengal, and only a few require particular description.

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A *takhsīsī* tenure is one in which the proprietor reserves to himself a right to enhance the rent after measurement at some future period. *Tashkhīsī* means a tenure in which the *zamīndār* grants a lease at a rent assessed after a measurement already made.*

The total number of tenures of these two kinds in 1875 was 1,289.

Tāluk.

Karār tāluk is one for which a sum less than the nominal rent is paid under a contract (*karār*); such may be formed when for some reason or another the tenant is unable to pay the rent originally agreed upon, and either obtains a remission from the

* *Vide* para. 177, Settlement Report of *pargana* Roshnābād.

zamīndār or surrenders it to the latter, who lets it out again at a lower rent.

The *āgatdār* is a person who has obtained in some way a portion of an undivided *tāluk*. He undertakes to pay a portion of the rent, and is not a sub-tenant but a co-sharer with the original *tālukdār*. "In actual practice," says Mr. Cumming, "an *āgat* is obtained by paying as a price a lumpsum which works out to from 10 to 14 years' purchase of the net profits, and by agreeing to paying contributions to the *tālukdār* until the *āgatdār* may have himself separately registered." The same term was used formerly for a small *tālukdār* who placed himself under the wing of a big *tālukdār* to escape interference from the *zamīndār's* agents, but this was really not an *āgat* but a *gata tāluk*. This tenure is found only in Chakla Roshnābād. Agat Taluk.

The name is derived from a Persian word, meaning a trust. Originally the term designated the tenure of a person to whom a commission was given on favourable terms to bring land into cultivation, but in practice it is used for a permanent tenure held sometimes at a fixed and sometimes at a variable rate. Hawālā.

Alufādāri, from a Persian word meaning friendship, denotes tenures granted by a former owner of *pargana* Gangāmandal to his friends. *Murādāri* is a form of tenure allowed to a broker or a collector of dues in a market. *Ābādi tāluk:* a grant of waste land to a man who undertakes to bring it under cultivation, usually paying a progressive rent for a term of years after which he and his successors hold it at a fixed rent or rate, such as Rs. 5 a *dron*. These and other classes of tenures are further defined by certain terms, such as *mirās* (heritable), *istemrāri* (permanent), *kāimi* or *mukarrari* (at fixed rent), *izhāri* (claimed, *i.e.*, not admitted by one party), *miyādi* (temporary). *Kārkona* is a service tenure on a low rent. *Chirāgi* are grants, generally rent-free, to the persons whose duty it was to carry torches when the *zamīndār* travelled through their neighbourhood. In many cases the owners of tenures of the several classes have sub-leases on similar terms, the subordinate tenure being distinguished by the prefix *shikmi* or *petāo* (in the belly), or *nim* (half) or *osat* (included). The prefix *dar* also implies a tenure of the 2nd degree, and *kāt*, one of a still lower degree. In the case of *pātnis* the subordinate classes are *darpātni, sepātni*.

The tenures described hitherto all connote some degree of property in the soil, but besides these we meet with many farming leases (*ijārā*, or when given to an outsider *zimmā*) which convey only a right to collect rents for a term. In 1866 Mr. Browne, Superintendent of the Revenue Survey, reported that the greater part of the district was let in farm for periods of three to five years. The practice is by no means so common now, since the great estates of the absentee landlords have been in the hands of the Court of Wards, but still obtains in the Gangāmandal estate and in those of the Nawāb of Dacca in *pargana* Durlai and Bardakhāt. Farming leases.

The Gangāmandal estate comprises 473 villages with an area of 150 square miles in 7 out of the 10 *thānās* in the Tippera district, besides outlying lands in Dacca. It is held by a receiver of the High Court on behalf of the owners, members of one branch of the Sobhā Bāzār family, who in turn have taken it in farm for periods of six years at a time. It has been the practice of these farmers to sub-let the property in parcels for three to six years (*dari jārā*). There are said to be more than a hundred of such sub-farms, and these in turn are often sublet to the principal ryots in *kāt-ijārā*. The under-farmers are said to collude with the villagers in concealing the real rents, compensating themselves by exacting a substantial premium (*nazar*) from each tenant. The confusion resulting in this system of management is set out in a report by Mr. J. G. Cumming on the settlement of four villages in this estate in 1897-98. It is noticeable that as long ago as the year 1789 *parganas* Bardakhāt and Gangāmandal were parcelled out among numerous farmers described at one time as *tarafārs* and at another as *Ihtimāmdārs* in charge of *joārs*.

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In 1875 the Collector returned a list of tenures in the district, but it is to be feared that it does not completely represent the sub-infeudation. In the large estates alone he showed 9,656 tenures of the first degree,* classified under 85 heads, 7,653 of the second, 2,458 of the third, 614 of the fourth, and 47 of the fifth grade; while for all estates, great and small, the number of tenures was about 25,000.

There are no materials for a complete list of the tenures that now exist, but statistics compiled in recent re-valuations of some *thānās* throw a little light on the subject. In 348 estates valued in *thānā* Hājiganj lands with a gross rental of Rs. 1,99,000, or four-sevenths of the whole, were included in 13,270 tenures, of which 5,934 were held directly from the *zamīndārs*, 53,989 were of the second, 1,283 of the third, 118 of the fourth, and one of the fifth grade. In *thānā* Murādnagar a little more than five-sevenths was held by tenure-holders, of whom 1,861 were of the first, 736 of the second, 1,033 of the third, 932 of the fourth, 12 of the fifth, and 36 of the sixth grade. Elsewhere the statistics show only the proportion of the cesses paid by intermediate tenures of all grades.

In the northern division of Chakla Roshnābād 85 per cent. and in the central division 41 per cent. of the land is held by tenure-holders. In Sarāil, on the other hand, only 13 per cent. of the estate had in 1893 been given out in permanent tenures.

On the subject of sub-infeudation, Mr. Cumming writes as follows:—

"In the area held by tenure-holders it may be generally asserted that the prevailing feature is not sub-infeudation, but

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* But the names of some of the tenures show them to be of a lower degree originally.

sub-division. There is sub-infeudation, but not to the extent which exists in the neighbouring district of Bākarganj or in the *sadr* part of Noākhāli. One instance found was as follows:—proprietor, then a *tāluk*, then a *dartāluk*, then a *patni*, then a *darpatni* and then the ryot. Herein are four intermediaries between the cultivator and the Rāj. The process of subdivision is the result partly of inheritance, especially amongst Muhammadans, and of transfers; but the subdivision is principally due to the system under which tenures were created without definite areas in a country in which and at a time when spontaneous increase of cultivated area was both possible and permissible. The result is an intermixture of tenures similar to that existing amongst the estates in Muzafarpur and Chittagong. Anomalies of course are discovered when the record of rights is prepared. Several *tāluks* are found to be holding some lands jointly, but the holders cannot say what the proportionate share of each *tāluk* is. This is the chrysalis stage. Again, certain land is recorded as held jointly (*ijmāli*) under several *tāluks* and the shares are settled; but the holders of the *tāluks* are receiving rents from the tenants out of proportion to the nominal shares. This is a further development, in which the weaker go to the wall. The last stage is when the area originally held jointly has been parcelled out by mutual arrangement, so that each *tāluk* has the entire possession of the lands allotted to it (*chinit dakhal*). The more inchoate the stage of growth of the tenure, the greater is the difficulty of record. Out of the *tāluks* in the Northern Division there are 1,280 in one village, 501 in two villages, 257 in three villages, 193 in four villages, 90 in five villages, and 184 in more than five villages. Two odd mixtures are the following. The land covered by the jail in Comilla belongs 1 anna 5 pies to the Rāj, and 14 annas 7 pies to a Collectorate *khārij tāluk*. Under the Rāj Government holds a *kāimi tāluk* and under the holders of the *khārij tāluk* Government holds a *mukarari* tenure. And again, a *mukarari tāluk* and a *takshīshī tāluk* possess jointly lands in the shares of six annas and ten annas. From the *takshīshī tāluk* has been granted an *āgat tāluk*, 4 of the 10 annas of which are held by the holder of the *mukarari tāluk* and the remaining 6 annas by an outsider. The *mukararidār* under one rent receipt collects the whole of his shares. To show the combinations which result from the subdivision of the lands, I take a small village Dvijapur of 186 plots covering 60 acres. There are 9 *tāluks* concerned. Five holdings are held by separate *tāluks* in their own possession (*nij-dakhal*), 5 holdings are held in *nij-dakhal* by different combination of 7 *tāluks*, 2 at a time, 3 at a time and 5 at a time, five holdings are held by tenants, each entirely under a separate *tāluk*, and one holding is held in the *nijdakhal* of an *āgatdār* under one of the *tāluks*. In one *bīl* division of title had to be distributed amongst 27 tāluks whose lands surrounded it."

Such combinations inevitably lead to uncertainty of title, open the door to fraud, and lead to litigation and rioting. An additional

complication results from the course adopted in certain estates of joining several persons as joint lessees of a single tenure.

s. A considerable proportion of the district is cultivated by petty proprietors and permanent tenure-holders, generally through the medium of hired labourers, but the great bulk of the agriculture is in the hands of *ryots*, that is, peasants who have obtained land for the purpose of cultivating it themselves, or the successors in interest of such peasants. In the 18th century a very large fraction of the land was uncultivated, and the *ryots* were nomadic in their habits, cultivating a field for a few years and then moving on to another. The *zamīndārs*, it appears, entered into no regular engagements with their *ryots*, but just before the harvest made a measurement and valuation (*hastabūd*) of the lands actually cultivated. The Regulations of 1793 insisted upon the grant of *pattas* or leases to each *ryot*, a provision intended for their protection from extortion, but in Tippera there was great opposition to the receipt of *pattas* on the part of the *ryots*, and some of them submitted petitions, declaring that they never had and never would accept them. In this connection the Collector reported that the higher classes of *ryots*, such as *mandals* and *shunnahs*,* were the main support of the landholders, and that when *ryots* died or deserted it was usual to offer their holdings to these higher class *ryots*, who used to subdivide them at their own risk for the succeeding crop, and that nearly two-thirds of the land was cultivated by under-*ryots*.†

As late as 1835 the Collector divided the cultivators into two classes—*ryots* who paid a fixed rent and enjoyed the privilege of cultivating the best lands, and *jotdārs* who paid according to the quantity of land annually cultivated. At present the rights of *ryots* are regulated by the Bengal Tenancy Act of 1885, and it is said that the relations of landlords and tenants are in fact governed by the provisions of this Act rather than by any local custom. Nearly all the *ryots* have occupancy rights, the areas found in recent settlements in possession of non-occupancy *ryots* being insignificant.

-ryots. The practice of subletting *ryoti* land does not prevail to any great extent, except in the west of the district. In the settlement of Sarāil about a sixtieth of the rent-paying area was found to be in possession of under-*ryots*, most of whom paid rent in kind, amounting to either half or a third of the produce. In the Pātikārā estates about a twelfth of the occupied area was held by under-*ryots*, but produce rents were paid for only one per cent. In Chakla Roshnābād about one per cent. of the occupied area was held by under-*ryots*. In Tippera under-*ryots* are not considered to have occupancy rights.‡

os. The Regulations of 1793 required all *abwābs* (demands for specific purposes) to be consolidated with the rent, and prohibited

* *Shunnah* is not explained.
† Letter of 27th June 1793.
‡ As to *khay bandak*, *vide* page 43.

the levy of such impositions in future. In a few cases *abwābs* were actually abolished, as in Bardakhāt, where, in 1787, Mr. Paterson remitted nine out of twenty-two *abwābs*, aggregating Rs. 59,154 (though the actual reduction of rental came to only Rs. 10,000). Nevertheless, in most estates, such demands continued to be made, and were generally complied with so long as the landlords and tenants were on good terms. Some of these cesses take the form of contributions towards expenditure on special occasions, such as a measurement or settlement (*jarip* and *bandabasta kharchā*) or for religious ceremonies or festivals, such as the Kāli Pūjā, or the Uttarāyan Sankrānti.

In the statistical account of the district a case is reported in which a *zamīndār* begged to be allowed to improve a canal as a charitable work; permission was given and the work carried out, but it was ascertained subsequently that though the cost was only Rs. 400, the *zamīndār* had levied for the purpose sums amounting to Rs. 1,100. But the *abwāb* most generally levied throughout the district is *tahari*, a small fee paid to the clerk who takes the tenant's account and grants the receipt; this amounts to from two pice to one anna per rupee of rent, and goes into the pockets of the members of the collecting establishment. It is said that in many estates roads and public works cesses are collected at the rate of one anna or six pice per rupee of rent, *i.e.*, at double or treble the legal rate.

Rent Receipts. In the larger estates rent receipts in proper form are usually given, but this is not the case always with tenure-holders and petty proprietors.

Common lands. In many villages there are, or used to be, lands not settled with any tenant on which the village cattle graze. In some estates these lands are now settled with all the villagers in common tenancy at low or nominal rents on condition that they shall not be brought under the plough. The question whether such a condition can be enforced under the provisions of the Bengal Tenancy Act is now before the courts.

Tanks. Permission to excavate a tank is the prerogative of the landlord, who takes usually a small fee for excavation or re-excavation. In Chakla Roshnābād the principle is that tanks, for the excavation of which a premium has been paid, remain unassessed so long as they contain water, but when they silt up, lapse into the assessable area. As a rule, however, when a tenant excavates a tank within his holding he has to pay the premium, but receives no abatement of rent.*

Transfers of tenant right. *Tāluks* and permanent tenures are transferable, though divisions of the tenures are not binding on a landlord unless he consents.

There is no established usage of transfer of occupancy rights; the transferee being bound to obtain the landlord's consent, which

* Para. 157, Settlement Report on Chakla Roshnābād.

generally means the payment of a premium (*nazar*) for the registration of his name. In Chakla Roshnābād this was levied formerly at uncertain rates. In 1892 the rate was fixed at 25 per cent., but reduced later to 12 per cent. or Re. 1 per *kāni*, whichever was greater, subject to a limit of Rs. 10 for one transaction.

In the Pātikārā estates the premium demanded was at the rate of 25 per cent., but the settlement officer found that this was not always paid, transfers not being registered. He notes that tenants generally sell small portions of their holdings to raise money, it not being customary to mortgage holdings. This practice obtains throughout the district and in most cases is recognised by the landlords on payment of the customary *nazar*. In Government estates transfers are recognised without payment, and in some instances the transferee of a portion of a holding is allowed a separate *khatian*, in others is shown only as a sharer in the original holding.

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nue.

It does not appear that the Muhammadan rulers demanded from the *zamīndārs* in Eastern Bengal any fixed proportion of the gross assets of their estates. In the original assessment a certain portion of the land, nominally not exceeding 7½ per cent., was set apart under the designation of *nānkar* for the remuneration and support of the *zamīndār*, and the service lands (*chākrān jāgīr*) and grants to Brahmans or pensioners of Government (*bāze zamīn*) were exempted from assessment. The rest of the land was divided into *khalsa*, the whole assessment on which was payable into the Imperial Treasury, and *jāgīr* the revenue of which was appropriated to local administration. In *tāhudi* estates the *zamīndār* was bound to pay the whole amount assessed, but was allowed to keep the profits accruing from any extension of cultivation in the intervals between one assessment and the next, except in so far as further payments were extorted from him by the local governor or by his subordinates; but there appear to have been other estates in which the whole collections less a certain percentage were payable to the Treasury. This was the case down to the assessment made by Mīr Jafar in the year 1722, but after that period large additions (*izāfa*) were made under the designation of *kaifiyat* (account of profits), *taufir* (excess of *jāgīr*), and *abwābs*, nominally demands to meet special items of expenditure and often in lieu of personal services previously rendered. These additions did not find their way into the Murshidabad Treasury but into the pockets of the *Naib* or *Dīwān* at Dacca, if they were not intercepted by the farmers and subordinate agents.* In this way the assessment of *pargana* Homnabād fixed at Rs. 26,827 in the year 1728 had risen by 1763 to Rs. 1,09,231; that of *pargana* Gangāmandal had been raised from Rs. 36,681 to Rs. 1,03,725; in the case of *pargana* Bardakhāt the

* For a full account of these *abwābs*, *vide* Mr. J. Grant's Analysis of the Revenues of Bengal.

Collector reported that the original *jama* of Rs. 41,421 had been quadrupled by the imposition of twenty-two *abwābs;* and like additions had been made to the revenues of other estates. When the East India Company took over the revenue administration, they were unable to obtain correct information as to the resources of the district, and resorted in the first instance to farming the estates to the highest bidders, but after 1777 were generally content to accept the revenue that had been paid in the previous settlement. In some cases detailed measurements were made. Thus Mr. Pym in the year 1789-90 surveyed Gangāmandal and Baldakhāt, and on the basis of his measurements the Board of Revenue fixed the demand from these *parganas* at Rs. 62,504 and Rs. 1,81,003 respectively and refused to take less.* In the Regulations for the decennial settlement it was provided that the assessments should be made so as to leave the proprietor a profit equal to ten per cent. of the assets, and the *zamīndār* who refused to accept settlement was entitled only to ten per cent. of the amount actually realised by Government; but as many of the whole and broken *parganas* were settled with the *zamīndārs* on the basis of the revenue paid in previous years, it is often difficult to say what proportion the revenue bore to the actual collections; moreover, the law allowed Collectors discretion to give more than ten per cent. to the owners of separated *tāluks* and other small properties when the circumstances required it, and advantage was freely taken of this concession. In several instances, however, the proprietors refused to engage for the revenue proposed, and enquiries had to be made into the resources of their estates. Such was the case in *pargana* Bardakhāt, as to which the Collector in a letter of the 19th August 1795 reported that the *sadr jama* was Rs. 1,81,003, which had, however, been realised in only four years out of sixteen, and that its resources did not exceed Rs. 1,88,000 a year, and recommended its settlement at a revenue of Rs. 1,50,000. A one-sixth share of it was actually farmed out for Rs. 27,500. The revenue payable for *pargana* Pātikārā, etc., in 1722, was Rs. 58,588; by 1763 the demand had risen to Rs. 94,638. In the minority of Mīrza Jān in 1791 the gross collections were Rs. 41,742. The estate was then let in farm for ten years for a progressive revenue rising to Rs. 79,182. But this was not realised, and in the year 1800 the Collector reported that the net collections for seven years averaged only Rs. 48,543 and recommended the reduction of the revenue to Rs. 56,000. This was accepted, but in the following year a permanent settlement was made at Rs. 61,000. In comparing the revenue of the permanent settlement with that of 1763, it must be borne in mind that the incomes of the landholders had been reduced by the abolition of the transit duties and fees from markets, etc., which they had levied formerly under the name of *sair*, and that they had probably appropriated

* Board's letter of the 10th September 1789.

to their own use a considerable part of the *jāgīr* assessment. The decennial settlement abolished all distinction between *jāgīr* and *khalsa* lands, relieved the *zamīndārs* of the upkeep of either police or revenue establishments, and made even their *nānkar* lands responsible for the Company's revenue. In valuing estates for settlement, the Collector seems to have been guided chiefly by actual collections; but in some cases all-round rates were applied to the cultivated area, and from a later report on the condition of Durlai and other *parganas* in the south it appears that these were assessed on a consideration of the profits of the cultivation of betel-nut. In the case of separated tenures, resumed grants, and alluvial accretions settled in perpetuity, the assets were based on the rates of rent shown in papers prepared at more or less remote dates, fallow lands being valued at the mean of the rates for cultivated lands. In the case of temporary settlements fallow lands were not taken into account.* Mr. Browne (1866) records that some temporarily settled estates were assessed at Rs. 3 per hundred betel-nut trees, but no trace of this form of assessment is to be found now. In 1850-51 the total land revenue of the district stood at Rs. 10,05,960; in 1892-93 the amount had risen to Rs. 10,56,477, and in 1907-08 was Rs. 10,98,496, of which Rs. 9,39,353 was due from permanently settled estates, Rs. 28,250 from temporarily settled estates, and Rs. 1,30,893 from estates managed by Government. The revenue amounts to just 25 per cent. of the gross rental of the revenue-paying estates calculated on the basis of the road-cess returns, and to about a rupee per cultivated acre.

Rents are payable generally in four equal instalments, or *kists*. In the Pātikārā estates there were formerly ten *kists*, but in the case of *ryoti* holdings the rent is now payable quarterly in Āshār, Āswin, Agrahāyan, and Māgh; about the fifteenth of the months of June, September, November, and January. In Sarāil the first two *kists* are the same, but the others each a month later. In Chakla Roshnābād the *kists* are nominally seven, but Mr. Cumming has recorded that no attempt is made to collect at every one and that payments are generally made three times a year in autumn, winter, and spring. In estates under the direct management of the Collector rents are payable in three instalments in August, November, and February. Land revenue is payable in one to four instalments, under the rules of the Board of Revenue, according to the amount; there being but one payment in March for amounts under ten rupees, and four equal instalments for a revenue of over a hundred rupees.

For the protection of his charge against the incursions of the Arakanese pirates, Shaista Khān, Governor of Bengal, during the reign of the Emperor Aurangzeb, organised a fleet of 768 boats with Portuguese gunners, and appropriated to its maintenance the

* Mr. Browne's report on Tippera, Section III.

revenue from the *jāgīr* lands of 112 estates, known as the Nawārā Mahāls, which included Sarāil and Bardakhāt, but it is uncertain how long this fleet was maintained or whether the money was spent as it was supposed to be. Apparently each estate was liable for the equipment of a certain number of boats. Sarāil, of which the *jāgīr* assessment was at first Rs. 14,095 subsequently raised to Rs. 40,234, was bound to furnish 42 boats, and the three parts into which it was divided in the 18th century are still known as the seventeen *kosha*, fourteen *kosha* and eight *kosha mahāls*. A *kosh* is a long fast boat used by the Dacca boatmen.

Enquiries were made in 1799 as to the manner in which the Nawārā assessment was realised, and the Collector reported that the whole was received in money by the *zamīndārs* and that no part was assigned to any officer of the Nawāb.

Coercive measures. The Muhammadan rulers used to imprison and sometimes grievously maltreat a *zamīndār* or *chaudhuri* who failed to pay his revenue, and for some time after the Company took over the administration the usual practice in case a farmer or proprietor defaulted was to arrest him and send bailiffs (*sazāwal*) to collect rents from the ryots. The early correspondence is full of references to the deputation of *sazāwals* and to the difficulty of collecting rents in this way.

The Regulation of the 25th April 1788 permitted the sale of portion of a defaulting estate sufficient for the liquidation of the balance due. The Regulations of 1793 rendered the proprietor liable to imprisonment and his lands to attachment if the whole or any portion of any monthly instalment was unpaid on the 1st of the month following, and at the close of the year the estate, or a sufficient portion of it, could be sold to satisfy the dues still undischarged. In 1794 the *zamīndārs* were exempted from imprisonment and Collectors were empowered to bring the land to sale at any time on failure to pay an instalment. The rule operated most hardly and many estates changed hands, and Regulation 7 of 1799 gave proprietors power to realise their rents by distraint and by arrest of the defaulter, and again subjected them to arrest for failure to pay their revenue punctually; and this was the law down to the passing of Bengal Act XII of 1841. The apportionment of revenue on the share of an estate selected for sale gave great difficulty, so that it becomes customary to put up entire estates to sale for substantial arrears, and under the present law, Bengal Act XI of 1859, the entire estate, except any share separately recorded under that Act or the Land Registration Act, is sold for any arrear.

Under these systems many estates came to the hammer. In 1802 a 5 anna 12 ganda share of *pargana* Sarāil was sold by the Collector of Mymensingh and another 7 annas in 1836 by the Collector of Tippera. Pātikārā after being for some time under *khās* management was permanently settled in the year 1801 with the *zamīndārs* (who were two ladies) at a revenue of Rs. 61,000.

Next year they fell into arrears, and after ineffectual efforts to sell it in five lots, the whole estate was sold in Calcutta for Rs. 32,200. It is said that the resources of the *zamīndārs* had been lessened by the creation of many *tāluks*. In 1835 Government bought in half *pargana* Bardakhāt for Rs. 1,99,000, and another sixth in the following year for Rs. 65,060. The arrears seem to have been due in this case to the extravagance of the proprietors who had recklessly alienated lands for cash down and had made many grants to friends and dependants. *Pargana* Gunanandi also came to the hammer. The severity of the law is still the same, but the growing value of property makes default less common, while the security of the revenue enables Collectors to be less strict. In the ten years ending in 1905 only 109 estates or shares of estates were sold, though there were 1,439 cases of default.

Arrears of public demands, including rents in *khās mahāls*, are recovered by means of certificates issued under Bengal Act I of 1895, which have the effect of a decree of a civil court and are executed by attachment and sale of the defaulter's property. In the ten years ending in 1905 the average number of such certificates filed annually was about 5,800 and in 1907-08 the number was 4,403.

The division of estates dates back to the Mughal period, but could not then be demanded as of right. Regulation VIII of 1793 (following earlier rules) provided for the separation of certain classes of tenures from the parent estate and for separate engagements with each person in possession of a separate specific portion of an estate. This led to a multiplication of estates, while Regulation XXV of the same year enabled sharers of an undivided estate to apply for partition, and the rules for the recovery of arrears of revenue prescribed the sale of adequate portions of estates. Restrictions on the degree of division were made subsequently, but by 1850 the original 117 *parganas* (of which 53 were in Chakla Roshnābād) had become 2,017 estates. After that the number decreased, it does not appear why, and then rose again, and is now 2,461 and increasing steadily.

Down to the permanent settlement only one proprietor was recognised in each estate, and where two or more persons had an interest in an undivided estate they were bound to elect a representative. This provision was rescinded by Regulation XVII of 1805, but in 1829 the Collector reported that it was becoming the practice to ask the judge to appoint a common manager. Now co-sharers can apply to the judge to appoint a common manager under the Bengal Tenancy Act, but they rarely do so.

Under Bengal Act VII of 1876 all persons having an interest in an estate are bound to register it, and at present there are over 17,000 separate interests registered in respect of the 2,212 estates permanently or temporarily settled.

In 1907-08 there were 2,336 separate accounts registered in respect of undivided shares, but only two in respect of separate portions of an estate.

Khās management.

The demand from the Government estates for the five years ending in 1901 averaged Rs. 1,01,000 a year and for the next five years over Rs. 1,16,000. In 1907-08 the current demand on the 246 estates was Rs. 1,30,893 and the collections, Rs. 1,29,701. (*a*) The cost of management came to Rs. 6,205 or 9·8 per cent. and the expenditure on improvements to Rs. 928. Rs. 3,581 were remitted and 350 certificates were filed for the recovery of arrears. This was for the year following a serious failure of crops, and in ordinary years the full demand is realised. For the ten years 1895—1905 the collections were actually a fraction greater than the current demand.

Most of the estates are in the Chāndpur subdivision. These are divided into two *tahsīl* circles, Himechar and Faridganj, in charge of the Subdivisional Officer. There is one *tahsīl* circle in the *Sadr* subdivision with head-quarters at Murādnagar, and there are only a few petty estates in Brāhmanbāria. Some of the *khās* estates of Tippera lie within the criminal and civil jurisdiction of Dacca.

Fishery estates.

The fisheries in the tidal navigable rivers are open to the public. Three fisheries, that of the Gumti, the Maizarddi jalkar, and Char Chataki, are owned by Government and fetch Rs. 1,146 a year. Some private estates also are assessed for fishery.

Kānungos and patwāris.

For the supervision of the accounts under the Muhammadan régime, a *kānungo* (expounder of the law) was appointed to every *pargana*, and was supposed to have subordinate to him village accountants or *patwāris*. They were paid by a *rusum*, or percentage on the collections, but it seems that they actually received lands in lieu of a money payment. There were *kānungos* for all the *parganas* of Tippera and *patwāris* also, but whether for every village or not does not appear. During the time of the farming settlements, 1772—1787, the officers of the Company did not concern themselves with these officials, and their functions fell into disuse.

The Regulations of 1793 directed the appointment of *patwāris*, and Regulation I of 1819 provided more expressly for their appointment, duties and remuneration, and further directed that *kānungos* should be appointed throughout the province. It does not appear what steps were taken in regard to *patwāris*, but in

(*a*) The difference between these figures and those on page 86 is due to certain peculiarities in the district accounts. In the first place the 246 estates shown here include 50 which have diluviated completely, and 72 parcels of railway land which have been sold free of revenue but are still borne on the list. The 52 Bardakhāt Taluks are also included and counted as one estate; but 43 of them are temporarily settled and the other 9 appear among the 134 estates under the Collector's management; so 246 - 50 - 72 - 1 + 9 = 134.

1876 they had ceased to be Government servants, and were merely petty rent-collectors employed by the *zamīndārs*. There was a good deal of correspondence in the years 1818–1827, regarding the appointment of *kanungos*. The Board of Revenue considered that there ought to be a *kānungo* for every *thānā*; the Collector thought this inconvenient owing to the difference in rent-rates and standards of measurement in different *parganas*. He stated also that the office of *kānungo* had become practically hereditary, that most of the present incumbents were quite illiterate, and not one of them could do a simple multiplication sum. However, in 1827 the district was divided among thirteen *kānungos*. The Collector reported that he had taken possession of their records, but that they had been much damaged by white-ants, and would, he feared, fall to pieces in spite of his efforts to preserve them. They seem to have disappeared by now. In 1871 the law regarding *kānungos* was repealed, and they ceased to exist except as subordinate officers of the Revenue Department employed on local enquiries and settlements.

ndārs.

Nearly all the large estates have passed out of the families of the men who held them in 1765, and most of the great proprietors are absentees.

Chakla Roshnābād with a gross rental of Rs. 8,34,000 and paying a revenue of Rs. 1,52,511 belongs to His Highness the Rājā of Hill Tippera, who lives at Agartala in independent territory, leaving the management of his *zamīndāris* to an officer of the Local Government lent for the purpose. The greater part of the Sarāil *pargana*, 277 square miles, was acquired by the ancestors of the present owners, residents of Kāsim Bāzār, at sales for arrears of revenue, and the few survivors of the ancient Diwān family live in genteel poverty at Sarāil, pensioners of the new-comers. Homnābād, granted by Shāh Alam to Prince Jahāndār, has been divided into 97 estates, and though Khān Bahadur Muhammad Ali Nawāz Chaudhri and Badarunnissa Chaudhrāni of Paschimgāon are lineal descendants of the grantee, their property has been much reduced. The Hon'ble Khān Bahadur Syed Husain Haidar Chaudhri, who owns a larger share of the *pargana*, is related to the original holders through his grandmother.

The Nawāb of Dacca has acquired by purchase a great part of *parganas* Durlai and Bardakhāt. Gangāmandal was sold at the *Khalsa* in 1781 to satisfy the creditors of Mirza Asadulla, and for a payment of Rs. 51,266 passed into the hands of Rājā Naba Krishna Deb, founder of the Sobhā Bāzār family, the present proprietors, but since 1836 their estate has been in the hands of a receiver of the High Court, and is leased temporarily to Rājā Binay Krishna Deb, who farms out the greater part.

Patikārā was sold for arrears of revenue in 1804 and after some transfers was bought by Rājā Satya Charan Ghosāl of Bhukailāsh in 1848, and still belongs to his descendants. Kādbā,

Amīrābād, and Bedarābād originally held by the Rājā of Tippera were granted by him to Mr. Courjon, at one time his manager and are now the property of Mahārājā Durgacharan Law's heirs.

A few smaller estates are still in possession of the original owners—thus the Rupsā *zamīndārs* are said to be representatives of the once independent princes of Singhergāon—but there is not a single resident *zamīndār* with an income of Rs. 2,00,000 a year.*

Revenue Jurisdiction. The revenue jurisdiction of the Collector of Tippera is not conterminous with the criminal and civil jurisdiction, in the sense only that the revenue of some estates and portions of estates lying outside the district boundary is payable to the Collector of Tippera and that of some lands within the district to other Collectors. The Geographical and Statistical Report by Mr. Smart, Revenue Surveyor, shows the area of all the *parganas* of Tippera as 2,655 square miles, of which 263 square miles are wholly or partly outside the district in Mymensingh, Dacca, Noākhāli, and in the Meghnā. Some adjustments were made subsequently in 1874 and 1875 along the Noākhāli border, and about the same time 131 square miles of the Chakla Roshnābād estate were transferred to the criminal and civil jurisdiction of Noākhāli. The total area of the district according to the Collector's registers is now 2,651 square miles, including 131 square miles of Chakla Roshnābād in the Noākhāli district and 21 square miles of other estates lying in other districts, but paying their revenue in Comilla. There are even some Government *khās mahāls* in the jurisdiction of the Magistrate of Dacca.

* An account of the estates of Sarāil, Homnābād, Patikārā, Bardakhāt, and Gangāmandal is given in the last Chapter.

CHAPTER XII.

LOCAL SELF-GOVERNMENT.

tory. The first experiment in local self-government was the appointment of a small Committee to help the Magistrate in administering his share of the Ferry Fund constituted under Bengal Act VIII of 1851. Under this Act tolls were levied on roads and ferries, but no further power of local taxation was given, and after 1855 the district allotment was fixed by Government on a consideration of its needs. On reviewing the work of these Committees in 1857, Sir Frederick Halliday decided that in most districts they had given little material help and only tended to derogate from the responsibility of the magistrates. Accordingly the Tippera Committee was abolished. A Road Committee with powers of local taxation was appointed under Bengal Act X of 1871, and in 1874 gave place to the Road-Cess Committee, which in its turn gave place to the District Board constituted on the 1.th July 1887.

The *panchāyati* system inaugurated in 1876 is another form of self-government.*

nicipali- There are three municipalities in the district, Comilla, Brāhmanbāria and Chāndpur.

illa. The Comilla Municipality was established in 1864, and is administered by a Municipal Board composed of 18 Commissioners, of whom 12 are elected, 5 are nominated, and one is an *ex officio* member. The area within municipal limits is 4 square miles, and the number of rate-payers is 3,211, representing 16·5 per cent. of the population (19,169). The average annual income of the municipality in the decade ending in 1901-02 was Rs. 22,000 and the expenditure was Rs. 21,000; and in the quinquenrium ending in 1904-05 they were Rs. 28,000 and Rs. 26,000 respectively.

me. In 1908-09 the receipts were Rs. 32,600, the most important sources of income being a tax upon persons according to their circumstances and property, calculated roughly at $\frac{7}{12}$ths per cent. on the annual income, which yielded Rs. 11,000, and a latrine rate, assessed at six per cent. on the annual value of each holding, which realised Rs. 8,000. Other minor taxes are those levied on houses and lands (chiefly public buildings), animals and vehicles, and tolls on roads and ferries. The total incidence of taxation was Re. 1-5-11 per head of the population. The municipality received also Rs. 4,500 in contributions.

nditure. The expenditure in 1908-09 was Rs. 32,800, in addition to Rs. 8,000 allotted for advances and deposits. Conservancy constitutes the heaviest charge on the resources of the municipality

* *Vide* page 75.

accounting for over Rs. 11,000. Rs. 7,300 was spent on the hospitals and dispensaries. The municipality keeps up five tanks that supply drinking water and has provided pumps for two. It has charge of the local pounds; subscribes to the schools (about Rs. 1,300); and maintains nearly 18½ miles of unmetalled and 8 miles of metalled road at a cost of about Rs. 5,000 a year. Another 6½ miles of metalled road in the town are kept up by the District Board. The water-supply and conservancy of the town are fair, and the Municipal Commissioners make the best of a very small income. It has been proposed to have an accurate survey made of the drains, but the low level of the town must always make drainage difficult.

Brāhmanbāria. The Brāhmanbāria Municipality was established in 1869 and is administered by a Municipal Board composed of 12 Commissioners, of whom 8 are elected, 3 are nominated, and one is an *ex officio* member. The Chairman was a member of the New Zealand Mission until 1908 when the sub-divisional officer was appointed. The area within municipal limits is 5½ square miles and the number of rate-payers is 3,701, representing 18·6 per cent. of the population (19,915). The average annual income of the municipality during the decade ending in 1901-02 was Rs. 8,000, the expenditure being Rs. 7,000; and in the quinquennium ending in 1904-05 they were Rs. 8,800 and Rs. 7,800 respectively. In 1908-09 there was an opening balance of about Rs. 4,000, and the total income of the year, in addition to this, was Rs. 19,200. The greater part of this sum was obtained from a tax on persons according to their circumstances and property at ¾ per cent. on the estimated income, which brought in Rs. 8,000, and a conservancy rate which realised Rs. 2,700. The incidence of taxation is very light, amounting only to 9⅕ annas per head of the population, which is less than in any other municipality in the division. The Commissioners received also subsidies amounting to Rs. 5,500. The expenditure in the same year was Rs. 17,700, of which Rs. 5,000 were spent on public works, while Rs. 3,400 were expended on conservancy, over Rs. 3,500 on water-supply, and Rs. 2,000 on medical relief.

A short while ago the roads, water-supply, and conservancy of this little town were very bad. In October 1905, part IX of the Municipal Act was first brought into force, the markets have been much improved, and many roads have been widened, but the water-supply is still poor.

Chāndpur. The Chāndpur Municipality was established in 1897, and is administered by a Municipal Board of nine Commissioners, of whom seven are nominated and two hold office *ex officio*. The area within municipal limits is 3·2 square miles, and the number of rate-payers is 1,726 or 17·5 per cent. of the population (9,362) in 1901. The average annual income during the four years ending in 1901-02 was Rs. 8,000 and the expenditure Rs. 6,000; and in the quinquennium ending in 1904-05 they

were Rs. 14,000 and Rs. 13,800 respectively. In 1908-09 there was a general revision of the assessment, and in the following year the ordinary income was Rs. 39,013, of which Rs. 15,708 was derived from the rate on holdings and Rs. 12,803 from a conservancy tax, both levied at 6½ per cent. on the annual value of holdings, and Rs. 3,100 from tolls on ferries. The incidence of taxation per head of the population was Rs. 3-8-3. The expenditure in the same year was Rs. 31,500, of which more than half was spent on conservancy. A good deal has been accomplished in this rising little port; ditches are being filled up, the old bāzār has been raised and drained, and a good fish-market made at a cost of Rs. 13,000. A good iron bridge has been built over the Nāpitbāri Khāl at a cost of Rs. 9,000, and there are now 11 miles of road, unmetalled but in fair order. There is a Pasteur filter in good working order, and a scheme for the supply of water to the old bazaar is under consideration.

All these little municipalities have in the past been hampered by want of money. They get contributions from the District Board towards expenditure that benefits the district at large, and occasionally Government gave a grant or loan for special purposes, but usually the Commissioners were deterred by financial difficulties from attempting reforms. Of late Government has given more assistance towards special objects requiring capital expenditure, such as the purchase of pumps for the Comilla tanks. Thus in 1908-09 the three municipalities received over Rs. 7,000 from Government and in 1907-08 over Rs. 5,000.

Dis- t rd.

Outside the municipalities of Comilla, Brāhmanbāria and Chāndpur, the administration of local affairs is controlled by the District Board, and subject to its control by the Local Boards in each of the subdivisions and by five Union Committees. The District Board consists of 19 members, of whom 9 are elected, 6 are nominated, and 4 (the District Magistrate, Civil Surgeon, Cess Deputy Collector and senior Deputy Collector) are *ex officio* members. There are 3 Europeans on the Board and 7 Muhammadans. The Magistrate of the District is Chairman *ex officio*, but the Vice-Chairman is elected. Much of the work of the Board is entrusted to standing sub-committees, of which there are seven, dealing with different branches of the work.

me.

The average annual income of the District Board (excluding the head of debt) during the ten years ending in 1901-02 was Rs. 1,71,000, of which Rs. 1,01,000 were derived from the road-cess. During the quinquennium ending in 1904-05 it amounted, on the average, to Rs. 2,04,000, of which Rs. 1,12,000 were obtained from the road-cess, Rs. 36,000 from Government contributions and Rs. 8,000 each from pounds and ferries. In 1908-09 the opening balance was Rs. 99,000, and the receipts for the year amounted to Rs. 2,84,000. The increase was due in part to the larger receipts from the road-cess, which had been raised in the

re-valuation of certain *thānās*, but chiefly to the more liberal contributions from provincial revenues, aggregating Rs. 1,21,000 and including Rs. 72,000 for education and Rs. 47,000 for the improvement of communications. The receipts from pounds have declined to Rs. 4,000, but ferries still bring in Rs. 8,000 a year. The receipts include also a sum of Rs 11,000, paid by the Habiganj Local Board towards the cost of the Fandauk-Noapārā feeder road.

Expenditure. The average annual expenditure during the decade ending in 1901-02 was Rs. 2,02,000, of which Rs. 1,04,000 were spent on civil works, Rs. 47,000 on education and Rs. 19,000 on medical relief. During the five years ending in 1904-05 it amounted to Rs. 2,48,000, the chief items being Rs. 74,000 spent on communications and Rs. 61,000 on education. In 1908-09 the expenditure, excluding debt heads, was Rs. 2,83,000, of which Rs. 1,45,000, or more than half, was on civil works, and Rs. 1,05,000 on education. Administration cost nearly Rs. 8,000, or 3 per cent., besides Rs. 14,000 for the District Engineer and his staff. The Board maintains 12 miles of metalled and 323 miles of unmetalled roads, and 293 miles of village tracks. It spent on their maintenance respectively Rs. 1,056, Rs. 231, and Rs. 78 per mile, making a total of Rs. 53,000, and another Rs. 56,000 on new roads, including several railway feeder roads. The Board maintains also 32 water channels for navigation and drainage.

Education. In 1909 the District Board maintained or aided 2,051 schools containing 71,000 pupils; Rs. 37,000 was allotted to lower primary schools, Rs. 11,000 to upper primary schools, and Rs. 6,000 to 30 middle English and middle vernacular schools. Higher education is not under the Board, but it maintained a technical school, the Elliot Artisan School, at Comilla, at a cost of Rs. 7,000, and subsidised 8 Sanskrit *tols* and 8 *madrasas*. Thirty-three primary scholarships were awarded, including four given to girls. Out of the special Government grant of Rs. 28,000 for the improvement of primary education Rs. 8,000 was allotted to female education, Rs. 14,000 to school buildings, and Rs. 3,000 to Muhammadan education.

Medical and sanitation. The expenditure on medical relief was Rs. 19,000, out of which 12 dispensaries were maintained and 4 others aided. The Board entertains one extra native doctor to deal with outbreaks of epidemic disease, and in 1908 appointed two more temporarily to treat cholera cases. It also maintains a veterinary dispensary at a cost of Rs. 1,700, and gives two veterinary scholarships tenable at the Belgachi College. The only expenditure that could be classed as Sanitary was Rs. 4,000 spent on excavating tanks, and Rs. 8,000 for the improvement of drainage. The Board has for some years past devoted a portion of its funds to the improvement of the water-supply by the excavation of tanks, but insists upon the people or their landlords contributing. The tanks so excavated are reserved for drinking.

ocal Boards.

Local Boards have been constituted for each of the sub-divisions of Comilla, Brāhmanbāria and Chāndpur. The elective system has not been introduced; and the Local Board of Comilla consists of 12 members, all of whom are nominated; that of Brahmānbāria of one *ex officio* member and 8 nominated members; and that of Chāndpur of 6 members, of whom one is an *ex officio* member and 5 are nominated. The Local Boards have been entrusted with various duties in connection with lower primary schools, water-supply, sanitation, and village roads, the expenditure on account of which is met from the allotments annually made by the District Board: the principal work done by them consists of the maintenance of a number of the less important roads.

ion Committees.

There are five Union Committees in the district, *viz.*, Sarāil, Nabinagar, Laksām, and Matlab, established in 1895, and Akhāura established in 1906. The area dealt with by these Union Committees varies from 16 square miles in the case of Matlab to 4 square miles in the case of Akhāura, while the population varies from 14,000 in the Matlab Union to 5,000 in the Sarāil Union. The Union Committees administer the amounts placed at their disposal by the District Board, and their work is limited to the improvement of water-supply, drainage, sanitation, and repair of village roads. The annual expenditure of each Union is about Rs. 500, and it is reported that the Committees, as a rule, make good use of the limited funds allotted to them. The Akhāura Union has been allowed ampler funds to enable it to improve the growing *bāzār* there, and has raised a little from contributions, so that it spent over Rs. 2,000 in 1908 and still had a substantial balance. Government made a grant of Rs. 1,500 in 1908-09 for the improvement of the water-supply in villages and this was divided among the Unions.

CHAPTER XIII.

EDUCATION.

The High School in Tippera was established in 1837 and down to the year 1860 was the only Government School. In 1870 the number of Government and aided schools was only 25 and they had only 993 pupils, but Sir George Campbell's grant-in-aid rules gave a great impetus to the educational movement and in 1874-75 there were 277 schools in the district attended by 9,126 boys and 142 girls. In 1892-93 there were 4,180 schools with nearly 84,000 pupils. In 1901-02 there were 1,947 schools containing over 61,000 pupils and in 1908-09 there were 2,635 schools with 94,665 pupils. The schools may be classified as Government schools 9, District Board and Municipal schools 54, private aided 2,103, private unaided 469; or as secondary schools 109, primary schools 2,318, *guru*-training schools 3, Engineering schools 1, *madrasas* 37, besides 136 schools not conforming to public standards, and 31 miscellaneous.

Expenditure

The total annual cost of education (*a*) in the district comes to Rs. 4,50,000, of which Government contributes Rs. 63,500, the District Board Rs. 97,000 (partly out of grants from provincial revenues), the municipalities Rs. 2,500, and private funds Rs. 72,000; while the balance of Rs. 2,15,000 is met from fees. These figures do not include the expenditure on Collegiate education Rs. 9,000. The rest of the expenditure may be classified as—inspection Rs. 24,000; secondary education Rs. 1,35,000; primary education Rs. 1,95,000; special schools Rs. 31,000; buildings and furniture Rs. 54,000; scholarships nearly Rs. 4,000; and hostel charges and miscellaneous Rs. 7,000.

Colleges.

The only college in the district is the Victoria College. Established in 1899 as a proprietary institution it was transferred in 1907-08 to the management of trustees. There were 107 students on the rolls in 1907-08 and the average cost per student was nearly Rs. 86. The usual rate of fee is Rs. 3 a month. It receives a recurring grant from Government and in 1907-08 a sum of Rs. 28,000 was given for new buildings and equipment. The equipment has been hitherto below even the low standard of the average second grade college.

Secondary schools.

There are 19 high schools, one managed by Government, 5 aided, and 13 unaided, with over 4,000 pupils. There are also 50 middle English and 40 middle vernacular schools with nearly 8,000 pupils between them. Of these two are under District Board management, 59 aided, and 47 unaided. The cost per pupil works out to about Rs. 18 in the high schools and Rs. 7 in the middle schools, while the receipts from fees average Rs. 14 and Rs. 4 respectively.

(*a*) Averages for the last few years.

Primary schools.

There were for boys and girls in 1908-09, 277 upper primary and 2,041 lower primary schools, and about 14,500 pupils on the rolls of the former, and 62,000 on those of the latter class. Five of these schools were under Government management, 51 under local authorities, and of the rest Rs. 2,026 were aided and 236 unaided.

There is rather less than one primary school to a square mile. Besides these there are 119 elementary schools not conforming to the public standards. The cost per head comes to about Rs. 3-5-0 in the upper primary and to Rs. 2-10-0 in the lower primary schools for boys, and the receipts from fees to Rs. 2 and Re. 1-9-0. Girls' schools cost but little over Re. 1 a head, but hardly any fees are recovered.

Engineering schools.

There is in Comilla an Engineering school, the Elliot Artisan School. Started in 1890 as a workshop to train artisans its scope was extended in 1895 by the formation of an apprentice department, and it has been affiliated to the Sibpur Engineering College. It is maintained by the District Board which charges no fees in the artisan class and grants several stipends of Rs. 3 to Rs. 4 a month on the apprentice side. There were 139 pupils in 1908-09.

Madrasas and tols.

There are 37 *madrasas* with 1,979 pupils. Nine of these are aided, and there are also 11 advanced schools teaching Arabic or Persian, besides 99 schools for boys and 17 for girls, teaching the Korān only. There are also 37 Sanskrit *tols*, with over 400 pupils. Six of these do not follow the standard curriculum and of the others only nine are aided.

Educational standard.

In 1881 the census showed that one in every twelve males and one in every 280 women could read and write. In 1901 the census returns showed that 11 per cent. of the male population, 24 per cent. among Hindus and 7 per cent. among Muhammadans, were literate, while of women one Hindu woman out of every eighty, and one Muhammadan woman out of every thousand could read and write. At that time the percentage of male scholars to boys of a school-going age was 45: it was in 1907-08, according to the figures of the Education Department, 44. In 1908-09 there were 80,000 boys at school. Taking the boys of a school-going age at 15 per cent. of all males they would number about 180,000 in round figures which would give a proportion of nearly 44 per cent. at school.

It is noticeable that the number of institutions and pupils was greater in 1892-93 than in any subsequent year until 1907-08, but the standards were lower then and fictitious entries easier. In the annual reports the reduction is attributed partly to the cyclone of 1893 and partly to the disappearance of bogus *pāthshālās* consequent on the change in the rules for payment.

Female education.

There were in 1908-09 one middle vernacular, 3 upper primary and 628 lower primary girls' schools, besides 17 schools teaching the Korān only. In all there are some 14,500 girl pupils. In 1900-01

there were less than half that number, and it seems that Muhammadan girls are beginning to go to school more freely. The Hitasādhini Sabhā, a society with its head-quarters in Calcutta, but working chiefly in Tippera, has been trying for many years to advance the cause of women's education.

Management and inspection. The management of primary and middle schools is entrusted to the District Board and in towns to the Municipal Commissioners. High schools are under the direct control of the Educational Department assisted by a local committee. Such committees exist also for middle and occasionally for upper primary schools, but in regard to these are rarely of much assistance. The subordinate inspecting agency was up to the current year under the local authorities, but has now been transferred to the Department. The sanctioned staff for Tippera consists of 5 Deputy Inspectors, 18 Sub-Inspectors, and 5 Assistant Sub-Inspectors under the Inspector of Schools for the Chittagong Division, but the full staff has not been appointed yet.

Unaided schools usually conform to the recognised standards and submit themselves to inspection, and in the case of high schools are subject to the regulations of the University.

CHAPTER XIV.

GAZETTEER.

1. Akhaura.—Village in the Brāhmanbāria subdivision, a station on the Assam-Bengal Railway, thirty miles from Comilla. It was connected by steamer with Brāhmanbāria and Chāndura Bāzār, and is the junction for the new branch line through Brāhmanbāria to the Meghnā. The sanitation and local roads within an area of 4 square miles were in the year 1906 placed in charge of a Union Committee.

2. Ashuganj.—Mart on the Meghnā opposite Bhairab Bāzār. Terminus of new branch railway line from Akhāura, and station of call for steamers.

3. Bardakhat.—The largest *pargana* in the district; area 386 square miles,* containing 21 estates (counting as one the temporarily settled *tāluks*); total revenue Rs. 2,11,574. The bulk of it lies on either bank of the Gumti in Morādnagar *thānā*. The former name of this *parganā* was Baldakhāl.

According to tradition† Baldakhāl, Sarāil, Gangāmandal, Paitkārā, and Nurnagar were granted by the Mughal Emperor to Nayan Thākur of the ruling house of Tippera who, after an abortive struggle for the throne, turned Muhammadan and retired to Delhi. This tradition makes Mirza Bhela, who was in possession at the time of the Grant of the *Diwāni* to the East India Company, the son of Bākar Beg, husband of Nayan Thākur's grand-daughter, but in a note on the family given by a member of it Mirza Bhela is described as the great-grandson of Bākar Beg. According to the author of the Rajmālā the *pargana* in the time of Akbār was possessed by Isā Khān of Khizrpur, the most powerful of the Bhuiyās of Bengal, and Mirza Bhela was a son of Akā Sādik in whose name Baldakhāl stood in the revenue roll of 1722. This Akā Sādik is supposed to have been a descendant of Isā Khān, and may have been connected also with Nayan Thākur. After the subjugation of Tippera, Baldakhāl, Paitkārā, and Gangāmandal were granted as an *altamgha* to Nawāb Saiyad Karim Kuli Khān, son of Shāh Alam's Prime Minister, but Baldakhāl was managed as before by Mirza Bhela. In the year 1722 the *khalsa* revenue was Rs. 8,893 and the *jāgīr* revenue was Rs. 14,950; the latter sum apparently was not paid in cash, the *pargana* being one of the *Nawārā mahāls*, of which the *jāgīr* revenue was appropriated to the support of the fleet maintained on the Meghnā.

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* This was obtained by summation of the areas of the estates. Hunter gives only 205 square miles, Smart's Geographical and Statistical Account shows 364 square miles, of which 9 square miles lay in Dacca and Mymensingh.

† Report on the Settlement of four villages of Gangāmandal, by J. G. Cumming, 1897.

In 1835 owing to the extravagances of the *zamīndār* the estate became encumbered, and Government brought it to sale for arrears of revenue, and bought a half share for Rs. 1,95,000, and in the following year bought in another one-sixth. Fifty-two of the tenures were settled separately with the *tālukdārs*, and of these forty-three are still shown on the Collector's books, being settled for terms of from 15 to 25 years. Government afterwards sold the rest of its share, and it was bought by the Nawāb of Dacca, the present proprietor. The descendants of Akā Sādik continued to own a small portion of the *pargana* down to the year 1870, but have now parted with this last remnant of their possessions.

4. **Brahmanbaria.**—A subdivision occupying the northern third of the district. Its area is 769 square miles, and in 1901 the population was 677,000, of whom 39½ per cent. were Hindus. The subdivision was formed in the year 1860 and down to 1871 was known as Nāsirnagar, the name of the principal police station. The North of the subdivision lies very low and contains many extensive marshes, but the level is said to be rising and the area of the marshes contracting. About 80 per cent. of the subdivision is under cultivation, and of this portion nearly a fourth bears more than one crop in the year. Rice is by far the most important crop, but jute also is grown largely. The fisheries in the *bīls* and *khāls* are valuable. The people are well off and the standard of comfort is rising steadily. The subdivision is ill-provided with roads, and still depends mainly on waterways for its transport, but the new branch railway line from Akhāura to Ashuganj will pass right through it.

5. **Brahmanbaria Town.**—The head-quarters of the subdivision of that name. It is said to have been given its name by one Kāzi Muhammad Khandkar who turned ascetic and became a disciple of a Brāhman whose solitary homestead then stood amidst jungle on the site of the present town. The Kāzi's tomb is still pointed out in Brāhmanbāria and is an object of popular veneration. The importance of Brāhmanbāria dates only from recent years, and it is not shown in the older maps. In 1868 Brāhmanbāria was made a municipality. The area within municipal limits is 5½ square miles, and the population of the town in 1901 was nearly 20,000. It stands on the banks of the Titās river, and is connected by steamer with Akhāura, and the new branch line to Ashuganj passes through it. There are two markets; the town has a considerable trade, but is entirely rural in character.

6. **Chakla Roshnabad.**—The largest estate in the district, the property of His Highness the Rājā of Hill Tippera. This estate was finally annexed by the Muhammadans about the year 1732, and was then given its name of Roshanābād, or the habitation of light, by Sujā-ud-daula, the Bengal Governor. At the time of the grant of the *Diwāni* the Rājās of Tippera were semi-independent,

and the revenue was collected by military force. In the year 1776 a regular settlement was made with the Rājā, and annual settlements were made down to the year 1782 when the Rājā fell into arrears and openly resisted the authority of the Resident. In the upshot his possessions in the plains, forming the estate now known as Chakla Roshnābād, were settled piecemeal with the *chaudhuris* and *tālukdārs*, and it was not until 1793 that the Rājā was permitted to engage again for the revenue. The estate comprises an area of 528 square miles in the districts of Tippera and Noākhāli, of which 426 square miles, forming the northern and central divisions, are in Tippera. This area came under survey and settlement during the years 1892—1899. *Pargana* Mantala in the Sylhet district was then excluded from the survey, but has been surveyed since by the *Rāj*. The gross current demand for the year 1908-09 was Rs. 8,34,000. The collection expenses are about 12 per cent. of the collections. The land revenue is Rs. 1,52,511, and in the assessment made in the year 1900-01 the demand for cesses was fixed at just under Rs. 56,000.

7. **Chandina** *alias* **Barkamta**, formerly called Nabiganj, On the Chittagong Trunk Road, 12 miles from Comilla. Head-quarters of the Bhukailāsh estates, and site of a *thānā*, sub-registry office, post and telegraph office, dispensary, and inspection bungalow. Markets, Tuesday and Saturday, at which cattle are sold.

There are ruins of the 17th century and a tumulus which appears to cover a building of earlier date.

8. **Chandpur.**—A subdivision in the south-west of the Tippera district constituted in 1878. The area in 1901 was 588 square miles, and the population 483,208 living in one town and 1,103 villages. It contains three police circles, Chāndpur, Hājiganj, and Matlab Bāzār. It is a wholly alluvial plain on the shores of the Meghnā, which is continually forming new *chars* and cutting away the old ones. Three rivers, the Dākātiā, the Gumti, and the Dhanagoda, flow through it, and are navigable for country boats and small launches all the year round.

Jute, rice, and betel-nuts are the chief agricultural products, and in the southern parts cocoanut and dates grow well. The people are prosperous and peaceful, and the population increased by 30 per cent. in the ten years preceding the last census.

Chandpur town is the head-quarters of the subdivision of that name. It stands on the banks of the Chāndpur *khāl*, an inlet from the Meghnā. Fifty years ago this was quite a small channel, but in 1872 it was deepened and connected by a canal with Shikārhāt on the Dākātiā river. It is now more than double its former width, and its banks are protected at a great expense from farther cutting. It is the terminus of the Lāksām-Chāndpur branch of the Assam-Bengal Railway, and is connected by daily steamer services with Nārāyanganj and Goalundo. Other lines of steamers also call there

and a large trade is carried on by steamers, schooners, and country boats. There are seven European and two Indian firms of jute balers, besides an oil mill which does good business. In the *bāzār* there is an extensive trade carried on in paddy, rice, oil-seed, betel-nut, cane, kerosine oil, etc.

In 1897 Chāndpur was constituted a municipality, and its income, exclusive of contribution, is now about Rs. 39,000 a year. Having been built on very low land the town is full of tanks, ditches and pits, which are being filled up as fast as funds allow. The old *bāzār* has been raised, good drains have been constructed, and sanitary fish-markets made. There are eleven miles of road, mostly unmetalled, but in a fair condition. The area within municipal limits is 3·2 square miles, and the population was 9,362 in 1901, but is growing fast. The residents on the north bank obtain a supply of good drinking water from a Pasteur filter. There is a dispensary maintained by the District Board, and the New Zealand Mission established in Chāndpur since 1896 have a well-equipped cottage hospital.

9. **Chatalpar.**—Steamer station on the Meghnā in north-east of district. Large trade in jute.

10. **Comilla**—Is the chief town and administrative headquarters of the district, situated on the west bank of the Gumti river and on the main line of the Assam-Bengal Railway. The population in 1901 was 19,169, and the area four square miles. It was constituted a municipality in 1864, and the income of the municipality, excluding contributions, is Rs. 28,000 a year. About a mile south-east of the railway station stand the usual Government offices, and the brick-built houses of the European and the principal native residents. There is an English church consecrated in the year 1875, and the New South Wales Baptist Mission has been working in the town since 1887. There is a second grade college and two private schools teaching up to the Matriculation standard of the University, besides the Zilla school and a technical school supported by the District Board. There is a Public Library established in 1885, besides a private circulating library and one attached to the European residents' club. This part of the station is well laid out with wide open spaces, and good roads lined with handsome trees, and has a fine play-ground used for cricket, football and hockey, as well as polo. Further south lies the *bāzār*, which has fine wide streets, though the shops and houses are generally mean in appearance and built with bamboo or mat walls and roofs of corrugated iron. There are some 400 tanks in the town and its environs: one, the Dharma Sāgar, is nearly a mile in circumference. Five of these have been specially reserved for drinking water, and together with the Gumti river afford an ample supply; but the drainage presents great difficulties owing to the low level of the town, the streets being below the level of the river when in

flood. The town is healthy, the annual death-rate being under 16 per 1,000. Good roads, bridged, though unmetalled, connect Comilla with Dāūdkāndi, Lāksām, Hājiganj, Noākhāli, Chittagong, and Brāhmanbāria.

Daulatganj.—The *bāzār* of Lāksām, *q. v.*

11. **Gangamandal**.—A *pargana*, area 154 square miles,* containing 14 estates with a land revenue of Rs. 57,142. It seems to have belonged in the time of Akbār to Isā Khān of Khizrpur, and in 1789 belonged to Roshanārā Begum, who according to some accounts was descended from Isā Khān, and according to others from Nayan Thākur of the ruling house of Tippera, who turned Muhammadan. This much we know that her grandfather Akā Sādik † held a great part of the district in 1722 A.D. In 1790 the *pargana* was sold to satisfy its owner's debts and was bought for Rs. 51,266 by Rām Ratna Thākur, who sold it in turn to Rājā Naba Krishna Deb, Clive's Diwān and founder of the Sobhā Bāzār family, one branch of which still owns the principal estate, covering an area of 150 square miles lying in seven of the *thānās* of Tippera.

In 1836 a partition suit was instituted in the *Sadr Diwāni Ādālat* and the estate was taken charge of by a Receiver. The suit is still pending and the Receiver lets out the estate for terms of six years. Different members of the family have taken the lease in succession, and at present the lessee is Rājā Binay Krishna Deb, the largest shareholder, who lives in Calcutta and has a local manager at Jāfarganj. He sublets the estate in small farms for three to six years, and these farmers sometimes sublet again in *kāt-ijārā*. In 1789 the *pargana* was surveyed by Mr. Pym, and at that time was divided among a number of *tarafdārs*, or into *joārs* under *Ihtimāmdārs*. In 1896-97 four villages were surveyed and settled by Mr. Cumming.

12. **Hajiganj**.—A village in the Chāndpur subdivision, on the Assam-Bengal Railway, 34 miles from Comilla. It is the site of a *thānā*, post office, dispensary, rural sub-registry office and dāk bungalow. It stands on the Dākātiā river, and had formerly a very large trade in betel-nuts, rice, salt, kerosine, tobacco and jute, but the trade has suffered of late owing to the competition of Chāndpur.

13. **Homnabad**.—A *pargana* comprising 229 square miles in the neighbourhood of Lāksām ; divided into 97 estates with a total revenue of Rs. 1,08,111. It was at first a small Hindu *rāj*, and in the year 1722 was the *zamīndāri* of Shahzādā Amīr Mirza Humāyun Khān, son of Prince Jahāndār, the conqueror of Tippera, whose revenue was fixed at Rs. 7,032. It is said that he gave his

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* This is the sum of the areas of the estates ; but Hunter gives 122·5 square miles, and Smart's Geographical and Statistical Account only 98·78 square miles. The difference seems due to portions (*tappas*) of the estate having been shown as separate *parganas*.

† But see also under Bardakhāt.

name to the *pargana*, which in old records was styled Humnabāzu, *bāzu* (arm) being the term applied to an additional grant. Some of his descendants, the *zamīndārs* of Paschimgāon, yet hold a share in the estate, but much of it has been alienated.

14. Jafarganj.—Village in Tippera district. Situated on the Gumti and the seat of considerable river traffic. Connected with Comilla, the district head-quarters, 12 miles distant by a bridged road. Kutchery of the Gangāmandal estate. Dispensary and dāk bungalow.

15. Laksam.—A station on the Assam-Bengal Railway, 14 miles south-west of Comilla. It is a junction of the Chittagong, Noākhāli and Chāndpur branches of the Railway, and the site of a *thānā*, post office, dispensary, sub-registry office and dāk bungalow.

16. Mainamati.—Hills about 5 miles north-west of Comilla; the revenue-free property of the Rājā of Hill Tippera who has a bungalow on the highest point. The place gives its name to the cotton cloths made by the Jugis settled there.

17. Muradnagar.—On the Gumti, 22 miles from Comilla by road. Site of *thānā*, dispensary, sub-registry office, tahsil office, post office, and high school.

18. Nabinagar.—Mart on the Meghnā, 32 miles by road from Comilla. Site of munsifi, *thānā*, sub-registry office, dispensary, inspection bungalow, etc. Station of call for Meghnā steamers.

19. Panchpukharia.—Village in Tippera district. Situated on the Gumti, 56 miles by river from Comilla, the district head-quarters. Large river-borne trade in rice, jute, hides, etc.

20. Patikara *alias* **Paitkara.**—The former name of the capital of the kingdom of Kamalānka, at present the name of a *pargana* in the centre of the district which, together with portions of other *parganas* lying in Tippera, Noākhāli, and Dacca, now forms the Bhukailāsh estates. It is said that after the subjugation of Tippera in 1713 the *pargana* was made over to Akā Sādik, the *zamīndār* of Bardakhāt. In 1722 the total revenue, including *abwabs*, was Rs. 36,181, but in the year 1763 it was settled with Abdul Husain, a descendant of Akā Sādik, for Rs. 94,638. After being farmed for a while during the minority of the *zamindār*, it was settled permanently in 1801 with Karunnisa Khānum and Idannisa Khānum for Rs. 61,000. Next year the revenue fell into arrears, and in 1804 the whole estate was put up to sale in Calcutta and purchased by Hari Mohan Tagore for Rs. 32,200. In 1840 the estate was bought by Prasanna Kumar Tagore for Rs. 2,00,000 and reconveyed soon afterwards to Dwarka Nāth Tagore. In 1848 the property was sold again to satisfy a mortgage, and was bought by Rājā Satya Charan Ghosāl Bahādur of the Bhukailāsh family for Rs. 2,39,000. The new purchaser's son, Rājā Satya Saran Ghosāl, in order to ensure punctual payment of the land revenue,

granted *patni tāluks* with an aggregate rental of over Rs. 82,000, securing at the same time premia amounting to more than Rs. 1,42,000, and made a survey and settlement of the remaining portion of the estate. In 1869 he died, and disputes followed among the members of the family, with the result that in 1872 the estate was placed in charge of Receivers appointed by the High Court, and remained so for thirty years, when the partition suit was decided and Pātikārā assigned to the present proprietors, the heirs of Kumār Satya Saran Ghosāl, who are under the Court of Wards.

21. **Phandauk.**—Principal mart in north of Brāhmanbāria subdivision. Connected by new road with railway station at Chatiān.

22. **Sarail**—Is the most northerly *pargana* in the district, with an area of 304 square miles; a part of it known as Satarakhandal, in which the town of Brāhmanbāria stands, was included in the roll of Todar Mal in the year 1582 as part of *Sarkār* Sylhet, but the rest of the *pargana* appears to have remained in the possession of local governors under the Rājās of Tippera until the reign of Shāhjahān when it passed into Muhammadan hands, and Majlis Gāzi, a member of the family of the celebrated Isā Khān of Dacca, was appointed Diwān. The *pargana* was not then of its present extent, and tradition accounts for the increase in the following manner:—Nāsir Muhammad, son of the Diwān Nur Muhammad, when out hunting in the jungles to the east, accidentally shot dead a son of Rājā Dharma Mānikya of Tippera. Nur Muhammad handed his son over to the Rājā to be dealt with as he deserved. The Rājā pardoned him, but Nāsir begged that he might be executed, saying that as he had been deserted by his father, life would be unbearable. Dharma Mānikya with characteristic magnanimity replied, "if your father rejects you, I will be your father," and granted him Harishpur and other villages which were subsequently incorporated with Sarāil. In the reign of Aurangzeb Sarāil was made one of the Nawārā *mahāls*, the *jāgīr* lands of which were appropriated to the support of the fleet maintained for the protection of the country from the Arakanese pirates. In 1722 the revenue of Sarāil was shown as Rs. 1,11,084, from which a reduction of Rs. 40,324 was allowed in consideration of the Diwān's having to supply forty boats in case of need. About 1729 the *pargana* was divided into two estates, and in the permanent settlement it appears as three estates settled with different members of the Diwān family. In 1795 Sarāil was included in the district of Mymensingh, and in 1802 a 5 anna 12 ganda share was brought to sale for arrears of revenue, and purchased *benāmi* by Babu Jagabandhu Rai of Kāsim Bāzār, Sheristadār of the Mymensingh Collectorate. In 1831 pargana Sarāil was transferred to Tippera, and five years later a 7 anna share was brought to the hammer for arrears of revenue, and bought by Narasingha Rai, grandson of Jagabandhu Rai. Of the

remaining 3 anna 8 ganda share, three-fourths was purchased by the Court of Wards in 1885 on behalf of the minor proprietor Ashutosh Nāth Rai, whose minor son, now under the Court of Wards, thus owns 15 annas three gandas of the *pargana*. The remaining 17 gandas were sold away in execution of a decree of the Civil Court in 1856, so that the Diwān family have parted entirely with their interests. The *pargana* is now divided into fifty estates, paying a Government revenue of Rs. 39,807.

23. **Sarail Village.**—A large village, about 7 miles north of Brāhmanbāria, with which it is connected by road and river. It contains the head offices of the Sarāil estates, and also a sub-registry office. There is a mosque here erected in the year 1670 A.D., in honour of Nur Muhammad's wife.

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